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DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES
INITIATIVE: ASSESSMENT OF TEN NON-PILOT
COMMUNITIES

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**DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE:
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DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE: ASSESSMENT OF TEN NON-PILOT COMMUNITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Disaster Research Center has been conducting research on the implementation of Project Impact in communities around the U. S. since 1997. In earlier studies, research activities focused on charting the progress of Project Impact implementation in the seven original pilot communities. This report contains findings from DRC field work in other communities that subsequently joined Project Impact when the program was expanded. In all, ten communities were involved in this phase of DRC's work—one in each federal region.

To be included in this study, communities had to have achieved at least some level of sustained activity toward Project Impact goals. The communities chosen for the study vary in size; four are small, four are intermediate-sized, and two have large populations. The ten communities also differ with respect to the hazards to which they are vulnerable. Communities were selected to allow for variation in population demographics; while some communities have populations that are predominantly Caucasian, others have significant minority populations. To ensure confidentiality of study informants, study communities are not discussed by name in this report.

In 2000, DRC researchers made site visits to each of the ten communities, conducted a total of thirty-five interviews with Project Impact coordinators and other key informants, and collected a wide range of Project Impact-related documents. Data that were collected included information on partnership networks; strategies for developing and maintaining partnerships; vulnerable populations targeted by Project Impact activities; the status of risk assessment, mitigation, partnership, and education activities; the organizational structures that were developed to manage Project Impact activities; the benefits and challenges associated with Project Impact participation; and views expressed regarding the future of Project Impact-related activities in the study communities.

Partnership Networks and Partner Activity Levels

The ten study communities showed considerable variation in both the size and the composition of their Project Impact partnership networks. The number of partners involved in Project Impact at the community level ranged from nineteen to ninety-two. Community size appears to be unrelated to the size of partnership networks. Thirteen different types of Project Impact partners were identified. These include local, state, and federal government partners, businesses, educational institutions, health-care-related organizations, and religious institutions and affiliates. The partners most commonly represented in Project Impact partnership networks were community-based businesses, city government partners, and partners from local branches of national chains. However, the ten communities also showed considerable diversity with respect to partner involvement; for example, some communities had heavy governmental representation,

while others had partnership networks comprised primarily of businesses. For all non-pilot communities, there were high levels of activity and involvement with the program across all partnership sectors. The extent to which partners were actively involved in Project Impact activities was not related either to community size or to the size of partnership networks.

The data that DRC collected on partnership networks indicate that the types of organizations that were initially targeted by FEMA for involvement in Project Impact—for example, locally-based businesses—were in fact participating. The data also identify community sectors that were not yet well-integrated into Project Impact, such as non-profits and social service organizations.

Recruiting Partners to the Initiative

Many of those interviewed for the study stressed the importance of active community outreach as a means of engaging partners. Partners were attracted and kept involved through advertising campaigns, regular meetings, and the marketing of the Project Impact “brand.” Partnerships were also maintained through the regular dissemination of information on Project Impact activities and through program strategies that take the needs and potential contributions of partners into account, even if this means developing special programs or changing existing program foci. New partners were recruited into the initiative mainly through network ties and were often targeted for specific resources or expertise they can offer. Disasters also created “windows of opportunity” that served to stimulate partner interest in mitigation and preparedness. Partner contributions to the initiative include the provision of special expertise, in-kind donations, hard-money contributions, and the provision of facilities and free labor.

Interviewees noted that there were challenges associated with attracting both large corporations and small businesses to the initiative. Corporate headquarters were often too distant from local communities to become directly involved. Small business owners may have been too focused on day-to-day business survival and too short on personnel to have been willing to get involved in disaster-related activities.

In addition to building partnerships with conventional partner types, such as businesses and governmental organizations, some interviewees noted the importance of establishing positive relationships with groups representing vulnerable populations in their communities, including the elderly, low-income populations, physically- and mentally-challenged community residents, and ethnic minorities, as well as with facilities such as day care centers and hospices. Among these groups, the elderly were most frequently targeted in Project Impact outreach activities. Low-income populations and day care centers were also often given special attention. However, targeted outreach to differentially vulnerable groups—particularly in terms of integrating these groups into the planning process—was still not an important priority in local Project Impact sites, just as it had not yet assumed a high level of importance in the majority of pilot communities.

Progress Toward Project Impact Goals

Four activities—risk assessment, mitigation, partnership development, and public education and information—constitute core Project Impact goals. DRC has documented many examples of specific activities undertaken in the four core areas. The ten non-pilot sites had already completed seventy different activities in these four areas, with risk assessment and public education activities being the most common. A total of one hundred-forty-seven different activities were still ongoing; mitigation activities were the most common, followed by public education and risk assessment activities.

The ten communities included in this study had undertaken a wide array of risk assessment and planning activities, such as identifying and prioritizing critical facilities located in hazardous areas; developing mitigation plans; using geographic information systems (GIS) technology to map hazards; and developing inventories of structural and nonstructural hazards. Mitigation activities that were carried out in the ten communities include buyout programs, structural retrofits, and other measures designed to reduce hazard exposures, such as the elevation of structures to protect against flooding.

Partnership activities undertaken in the study sites included coordinating with mass media organizations to disseminate hazard-related information, working with banks to facilitate the purchase of properties in high-risk areas, partnering with insurance companies to market flood insurance to businesses located in flood plains, and developing programs with local suppliers of materials that can be used by households and businesses to mitigate disaster damage. A variety of public education activities were also undertaken. These include education and training sessions for homeowners, outreach to community residents living in hazard-prone areas and dwellings (e.g., mobile homes), media-based educational campaigns, and hazard-focused fairs and expositions.

Communities showed considerable variation in their ability to initiate and complete activities in the four core program areas, reflecting differences in organizational and community capacity. Communities that were making slower progress cited such problems as frequent turnover in the Project Impact coordinator position, difficulties with intergovernmental communication and coordination, and organizational start-up problems.

Organizational Arrangements and Structures

With respect to Project Impact organizational arrangements, most projects were located within local fire departments and emergency management agencies. As in the pilot communities, Project Impact program organization in the non-pilot sites varied, both with respect to organizational structure and with respect to the manner in which decisions were made. Vertical organizational arrangements—that is, those that are organized with steering committees and subcommittees—seemed well-suited to achieving and sustaining momentum. Programs with flatter organizational structures seemed to rely more on the energies of Project Impact coordinators to sustain their activities. Unlike the pilot sites, which had evolved decentralized systems for decision making over time, the non-pilot communities were more likely to have centralized decision-making structures, which

again placed significant burdens on the program coordinator. Even though less centralized decision-making would seem to be more consistent with the collaborative Project Impact philosophy, centralized decision making can stimulate activity more rapidly and help coordinate activities in large and complex jurisdictions. Regardless of where the initiative was housed or how it was organized, the personality, skills, and interpersonal networks of the Project Impact coordinator were instrumental to fostering programs or activities and ensuring the initiative's success. This finding is, again, consistent with what DRC concluded earlier based on its research in the seven pilot sites.

Program Benefits, Organizational Issues, and the Future of Project Impact

Interviewees identified a number of significant benefits that accrued to communities through their participation in Project Impact, indicating that the initiative helped communities leverage various types of resources from a variety of groups, helped reduce damage in communities that experienced disasters, promoted outreach and educational efforts, and helped build partnerships and foster teamwork. At the same time, they also identified challenges faced by those wishing to further community loss reduction efforts. Among those challenges were what community representatives perceived as burdensome bureaucratic requirements and inconsistencies, difficulties with determining how funds should be allocated, intergovernmental tensions, and delays due to turnover in key positions, particularly the program coordinator position. Like pilot communities, non-pilot sites simultaneously desired more guidance from FEMA and greater autonomy and flexibility. Perhaps most important, they desired consistency with respect to program guidance and expectations.

Also like their pilot community counterparts, the ten communities included in this study reported experiencing a variety of difficulties with sustaining momentum. This was particularly true for communities that did not have solid organizational structures in place when the program was launched. All Project Impact communities struggle to find ways to keep elected officials and community residents focused on mitigation, especially in the absence of actual disaster events. Many community representatives looked to FEMA to promote the initiative more actively.

While informants in the Project Impact pilot study sites tended to be optimistic about the future of Project Impact in their communities, views regarding the future of Project Impact were more mixed in the ten non-pilot communities. Interviewees from several communities expressed optimism about the future of the program. In one case, for example, informants anticipated that the initiative would ultimately become integrated with other community activities focusing on environmental quality. Others expected disaster resistant community activities to be sustained, although not under the Project Impact rubric.

More common was a sense of concern about the future of loss-reduction activities when federal funding ends. Threats to the future of the program included lack of commitment on the part of political leaders; competing community priorities, such as concern with crime and drugs; an absence of highly committed loss-reduction champions; and public apathy, particularly in communities where disaster events are infrequent.

Overall, the Project Initiative has succeeded in stimulating both public-private partnerships for hazard mitigation and a wide variety of risk assessment, mitigation, and public education activities in the ten communities included in this study. The initiative has provided a mechanism for focusing community attention and for better integrating what may otherwise have been a series of ad hoc efforts. Like the pilot communities that were studied earlier by DRC, the ten non-pilot sites experienced problems with initiating and sustaining their programs. However, despite these difficulties, they also managed to accomplish a great deal in a relatively short period of time, as evidenced by the number of activities that were either underway or recently completed at the time this study was conducted.

**DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE: PHASE 1
ASSESSMENT OF THE NON-PILOT COMMUNITIES:
YEAR 3**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: The Development and Goals of Project Impact

In 1995, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) unveiled a new national effort to encourage state and local adoption of mitigation policies and programs in an attempt to reduce escalating disaster relief and recovery costs. This effort, known as the "National Mitigation Strategy," was developed in response to growing catastrophic losses from natural disaster events during the past decade, including the Loma Prieta Earthquake and Hurricane Hugo in 1989, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the Midwest Floods of 1993, and the Northridge Earthquake in 1994. In addition to these major events, burgeoning economic losses from other natural disasters generated concerns that disaster events were proving too costly for the nation, particularly in terms of response and recovery expenditures and losses to households, businesses, the building stock, and the civil infrastructure.

In 1996, then FEMA Director James Lee Witt convened a set of roundtable discussions to consider different approaches to encouraging local-level adoption of mitigation programs. In addition to local and state emergency managers, representatives from local government, the insurance industry, the business community, and other key constituencies were invited to participate in the discussions. These meetings led to the development of a new program, originally known as the Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative, which was later renamed Project Impact.

Project Impact was designed to be different from other federal mitigation initiatives in several important ways. First, prior to the initiation of Project Impact, the federal government had provided mitigation funding to local communities through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is tied to Stafford Act post-disaster assistance payouts. For that reason, federal investments in community mitigation were mainly made in the context of disaster events. Project Impact changed that, making it possible for communities that had not experienced disasters to receive funding to mitigate future losses. Through Project Impact, FEMA introduced the concept of *pre-disaster mitigation* and made that concept an important element in federal loss-reduction efforts.

Second, rather than devising a program that would be managed through strict guidelines and tight regulation, FEMA designed Project Impact as a 'bottom-up' approach to mitigation that gave local communities fairly wide latitude in deciding what mitigation goals they would pursue and how. The intent of the program was to establish a wide variety of community-based initiatives to address mitigation issues deemed important by the communities and to encourage the development of innovative solutions to hazard-related problems. In its efforts to foster local community initiative and involvement,

FEMA worked directly with participating communities, particularly during the initial pilot phase of Project Impact.

Although communities were actively encouraged to develop their own strategies for reducing disaster losses, FEMA did outline general goals and objectives for the program. These overall goals were: (1) to build community partnerships; (2) to identify hazards and community vulnerability; (3) to prioritize risk reduction actions; and (4) to develop communication strategies to educate the public about Project Impact and disaster mitigation more broadly. Communities were then asked to formally establish locally-based organizations and to initiate activities that would address these objectives.

Project Impact was launched in the summer of 1997 with the identification of seven pilot communities that would receive seed money to implement new local programs and policies to improve their resistance to future disasters. The seven communities designated to participate in the pilot phase of the initiative were: New Hanover County/Wilmington, North Carolina; Deerfield Beach/Broward County, Florida; Pascagoula/Jackson County, Mississippi; Oakland, California; Seattle, Washington; Allegany County, Maryland; and Tucker and Randolph Counties, West Virginia.

Over subsequent years, FEMA designated additional communities across the country bringing the total number of Project Impact communities to nearly two hundred fifty. Although communities received less seed money from FEMA than their pilot counterparts, they entered into similar types of agreements with FEMA once programmatic elements were further defined and once the network of communities had begun to expand. Because of the limited number of communities designated in the pilot phase, only seven states and four FEMA regions had prior experience in the Project Impact initiative. The remaining states and regional offices began their introduction to the Project Impact when the 1998 non-pilot communities were designated. Communities that were designated in 1999, 2000, and 2001 thus encountered states and regions that were beginning to have more Project Impact experience, and they had many more nearby communities from which to garner advice than had those designated at the earlier stages of the program.

1.2 DRC's Project Impact Assessment

In Fall 1997, the Disaster Research Center (DRC), with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, began an assessment of the Project Impact initiative. Since that time, DRC staff members have made multiple site visits to a total of seventeen Project Impact communities, conducted over one hundred-eighty formal interviews, held eleven focus groups with over seventy participants from a wide range of communities across the nation, and collected and analyzed large volumes of documentary material from FEMA and from individual Project Impact communities. To date, DRC has produced several summaries of findings from the research that was conducted in the first three years of this project. Those findings are contained in the following reports:

1. Nigg, Joanne M., Jasmin K. Riad, Tricia Wachtendorf, Angela Tweedy, and Lisa Reshaur (1998). Executive Summary: Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Evaluation of the Pilot Phase, Disaster Research Center Final Report #40, University of Delaware.
2. Nigg, Joanne M., Jasmin K. Riad, Tricia Wachtendorf, and Kathleen J. Tierney (2000). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Evaluation of the Pilot Phase Year 2. Disaster Research Center Final Report #41, University of Delaware.
3. Tierney, Kathleen J. (2000). Executive Summary: Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Evaluation of the Pilot Phase Year 2. Disaster Research Center Final Report #42, University of Delaware.
4. Wachtendorf, Tricia, Jasmin K. Riad, and Kathleen J. Tierney (2000). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Focus Group Analysis. Disaster Research Center Final Report #43, University of Delaware.
5. Wachtendorf, Tricia, and Kathleen J. Tierney (2001). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Local Community Representatives Share their Views: Year 3 Focus Group Final Report. Disaster Research Center Final Report #44, University of Delaware.
6. Wachtendorf, Tricia, Rory Connell, and Kathleen Tierney with assistance from Kristy Kompanik (2002). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Assessment of the Pilot Phase – Year 3. Disaster Research Center Final Report #45, University of Delaware

When DRC's study of Project Impact began, the Center focused on the processes involved in organizing and implementing the initiative in local communities across the United States. In 1998, DRC visited each of the seven communities that were chosen by FEMA as pilot sites for the initiative and conducted interviews with one hundred thirteen key stakeholders. Interviewees included Project Impact coordinators, emergency managers, community planners, building officials, elected officials, and city and county managers, as well as representatives from the business and non-profit sectors. DRC compiled its list of potential interviewees from Project Impact partner lists, the memoranda of agreement communities had signed with FEMA, listings of local organizations involved in planning, permitting, and hazard issues, and recommendations provided by other interviewees.

As part of its follow-up with the pilot communities, DRC conducted formal telephone interviews with twenty-four Project Impact participants in 1999, all of whom were extremely active in their local initiatives. Members of the DRC research team also visited each community to gain a better understanding of the activities that were under way and to collect any additional documents material that had been produced since 1998.

During the summer of 2000, DRC continued its assessment of the pilot communities by conducting in-depth telephone interviews with the nine key officials who had primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the initiative in their communities. DRC researchers faxed specially-designed grids containing questions about activities and partnerships and asked informants to return the grids prior to their scheduled interviews. This process allowed for more time during the actual interviews to be spent discussing other important issues, such as strategies local communities used for broadening participation in the initiative, lessons learned, the organizational structures that evolved to carry out the initiative, challenges that communities face in promoting mitigation, and respondents' ideas about the future of Project Impact in their communities. The longest of these interviews lasted over three hours, with the average duration being just over two hours.

A total of eleven focus groups with over seventy participants were conducted over the course of three years, beginning in 1998. DRC selected focus group participants from lists of Project Impact Summit participants made available by the FEMA contractor organizing the annual event, and the group discussions were carried out at Summit meetings. The group participants were stratified on the following dimensions: their functional position in the community; the length of time their community had been involved in Project Impact; the FEMA regional location of their community; and whether their communities were urban or rural.

At first the objective of the focus groups was to compare findings from interviews conducted in the pilot communities with the experiences of participants in non-pilot communities. Later, the objectives of the group discussions were to: 1) provide suggestions for future changes to the Project Impact program; 2) examine more closely issues that emerged during the in-depth interviews that had been conducted with key stakeholders in the seventeen assessment communities; and 3) compare the current state of the initiative with findings from the earlier focus groups held in 1998 and 1999.

Findings based on the focus group discussions and on the interviews conducted in pilot communities are discussed in separate reports (see listing on previous page). This report examines implementation processes in the ten non-pilot communities; documents the progress they made toward achieving their mitigation, risk assessment, partnership building, and public education goals since the initiative's inception to their respective communities; and compares experiences of Project Impact communities – those more representative of the nearly two hundred fifty designated communities – to those of the pilot communities.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Community Selection

During 2000, DRC expanded its data-collection efforts to include ten additional communities – one in each federal region – that are relative newcomers to the Project Impact initiative. Communities were selected to provide variation in community size and hazard types. While the seven pilot communities were all given a very high degree of oversight and guidance by FEMA, the ten communities that were added to the study in 2000 are more representative of the nearly two hundred fifty communities that became Project Impact participants in subsequent years.

The selection of the non-pilot study communities began with the generation of a sample of communities ranging in size, socio-demographic characteristics, and hazards. One community was chosen from each of the ten federal regions. Communities needed to have begun some level of activity toward reaching their risk assessment, mitigation, partnership building, and public education goals, and therefore care was taken not to select communities in which Project Impact had only recently been initiated. As discussed below in section 2.2, to maintain anonymity of both communities and informants, the communities will be referenced as Community A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J throughout the report.

Four of the Project Impact non-pilot communities were small, with population sizes that fell in the range from 20,000 to 40,000. There were four communities of intermediate size, having populations between 85,000 and 250,000. Two other communities had large populations ranging from 400,000 to 700,000. These population ranges and the Project Impact non-pilot communities they include are charted below in Table 2.1.1. Communities also showed variation in terms of the geographic scope of Project Impact activities. Most were cities, but counties and regions were also included. Additionally, as indicated in the descriptions that follow and in table 2.1.2, communities also varied in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and hazard exposures.

Small Communities

Community C is a small, predominantly Caucasian city with a small African-American population. The major hazards the community faces are earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes.

Community E is a small town. Community E's residents are primarily Caucasian. The community faces earthquake, hurricane, flood, wildfire, ice storm, and river ice jam hazards.

Community H is a small county with a largely Caucasian population. Community H faces flood, earthquake, and landslide hazards.

Community J is a small, mostly rural county with a mainly Caucasian population; yet it also has a substantial American Indian population. Community J faces flooding, winter storm, wildfire, hazardous material, earthquake, and tornado hazards.

Intermediate Sized Communities

Community B is an intermediate-sized city. The racial demographics reflect a relatively even split of African-Americans and Caucasians, with the African-Americans comprising a slight majority. Community B faces flooding, hazardous material, hurricane, and earthquake hazards.

Community F, a city, is more than half African- American, and approximately one third Caucasian, with members of other races making up the balance. There is also a sizeable representation of Hispanics in the population. Hazards this community faces include hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and urban fires.

Community G, an intermediate-sized county, is mostly Caucasian and the community faces flooding, earthquake, and hurricane hazards.

Table 2.1.1 Project Impact Non-Pilot Community Population Ranges

| Population Range | Communities Within Range |
|---|--|
| 20,000 to 40,000 Small | Community C Community E Community H Community J |
| 85,000 to 250,000 Intermediate | Community B Community F Community G Community I |
| 400,000 to 700,000 Large | Community A Community D |

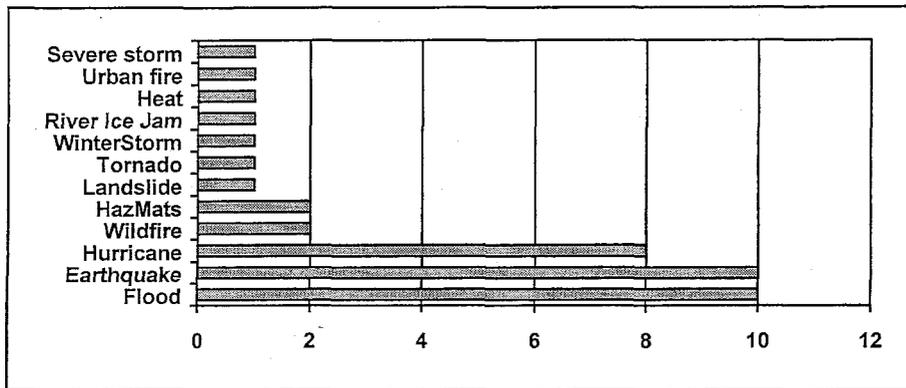
Community I is a regional community of intermediate size consisting of counties, cities, and towns combined. The community’s population is mostly Caucasian; its African-American population represents approximately one seventh of the population. The community faces flooding, earthquake, and hurricane hazards.

Large Communities

Community A is a large community with a joint city and county designation. Approximately one third of city residents and one fifth of county residents are African-Americans, with Caucasians comprising the majority of the remaining population. Community A faces flooding, earthquake, and hurricane hazards.

Community D, a large city, has a Caucasian majority but also substantial numbers of African-Americans, Asians, and other races, as well as a quite sizeable Hispanic population. The community faces flooding, hurricane, severe storm, extreme heat, and earthquake hazards.

Table 2.1.2 Count of Major Hazards Faced By Non-Pilot Study Communities



2.2 Data Collection

DRC researchers made site visits to each of the ten study communities, collected a wide range of Project Impact material and documents generated from the local communities, and held in-depth interviews with total of thirty-five key participants. The number of interviews in each community ranged from two to five. The Project Impact Coordinators were interviewed in each of the ten communities. Interviews with those individuals typically lasted between two to three hours and involved a comprehensive discussion about the risk assessment, mitigation, partnering, and public education activities in the community. Project Impact Coordinators were also asked about existing codes and regulations, the organizational structure of the initiative, successes and challenges in the project's implementation, and the long-term potential of the initiative in the community. Often, the Project Impact Coordinator also provided researchers with a tour of the community and sites where Project Impact activities were making an impact.

In each community, researchers also interviewed a planning or building official. Project Impact Coordinators were also asked to suggest one or two partners with whom researchers could meet and discuss partnership involvement in the initiative. For example, private sector representatives were interviewed in several communities. In other sites, DRC talked with representatives from community-based groups and leaders serving on specific project task forces. In one community, DRC interviewed a representative from a tribal community within the Project Impact-designated area. These interviews were focused on specific programmatic areas (e.g. building codes and regulations; partnership participation) and lasted between 20 minutes and two hours, with most lasting between one and two hours.

Interviewees were treated as informants with respect to their communities, rather than respondents. That is, while each informant was asked the same set of questions, it was not expected that each would be equally knowledgeable about the subject matter of every question. Information about current mitigation practices and Project Impact activities was then distilled from all of the interviews conducted in each community to develop an overall picture of Project Impact decision-making processes and actions.

Following standard practice for research of this type and in accordance with federal and university regulations, DRC guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of individuals who participated in the research assessment. In carrying out its data-collection activities, DRC also took care to emphasize that the goal of the research was to evaluate the Project Impact initiative as a whole, not to evaluate the success of specific Project Impact programs, organizations, or communities. This report does not identify communities by name. Instead, for reasons of confidentiality, communities are assigned letters. When specific projects that are only in place in one community are used as examples, the projects are not associated with the letters assigned to communities, again to protect the confidentiality of informants who took part in the study.

3. STATUS OF PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS

3.1 Introduction

Developing partnerships is a major Project Impact goal because partnerships are seen as major vehicles for increasing community disaster resistance. Not only are partnerships supposed to bring additional resources to the local community, but partnering is also a fundamental way to educate and involve diverse segments of the population in a collective effort to improve a community's ability to withstand extreme natural events in the future.

In addition to being asked about partnership-building activities, non-pilot study community interviewees were also asked about changes in the numbers, types, and activity levels of partners engaged in Project Impact. In analyzing interview material, DRC examined the extent to which non-pilot study communities were fostering partnerships among governmental and private sector entities, as well as the specific partnership strategies communities employed.

The information that DRC collected on the non-pilot study communities included basic information regarding the names of partners that were involved in the initiative, as well as data regarding the activity levels of partners. Names of partners were compiled from the communities' memoranda of agreement (MOA). During the interviews with community representatives, staff from DRC presented respondents with the list of partners collected from their communities' MOAs. Respondents were asked to rank each partner's involvement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "not at all active" and 5 indicating "quite active." Additionally, they were asked to indicate which of the organizations listed had not actually been involved in partnership activities, even if they had been named in memoranda of agreement. They were also encouraged to list any additional partners that had become involved with Project Impact since the MOA was developed.

In order to characterize the composition of partnership networks and demonstrate the diversity of partners within the communities, partnerships were divided into the thirteen categories listed below:

1. Federal government
2. State government
3. County government
4. City government
5. Community-based businesses
6. Local branches of national chains or franchises
7. Local media
8. Trade and industry associations
9. Non-profit and social-service based organizations

10. Schools and higher education institutions
11. Hospital and health care organizations
12. Religious institutions, affiliates, and organizations
13. Boards, commissions, and coalitions

Partners that did not fit into any of these thirteen established categories were represented in a fourteenth category: other partners. However, the thirteen specific category types were found to be quite comprehensive for the vast majority of all partners.

The sections that follow present data on various aspects of the partnership arrangements in the non-pilot study communities. Included is information on the composition of partnership networks (both within communities and across communities), partnering trends by sector, and partnership activity levels.

3.2 Partnering Networks

Table 3.2.1 shows the number of partners in each of the category types included in the study. The number of partners in the non-pilot study communities ranged from nineteen to ninety-two (an average of 45.3 partners). The size of a community appears to have little impact on the number of partners that are involved in that community's Project Impact initiative; a pattern DRC has also noticed in the Project Impact pilot communities.

The three most common partner types in the non-pilot communities were community-based business partners (89 partners), city government partners (71 partners), and partners from local branches of national chains or franchises (56 partners). Community-based business partners represented the largest category of partners, with numbers ranging from one to thirty-three (an average of 8.9 partners). The non-pilot communities had signed between three and seventeen city government partners to the initiative (an average of 7.1). There were between zero and eleven partners from local branches of national chains or franchises in the non-pilot study communities (an average of 5.6 partners).

In the DRC's 1998, 1999, and 2000 studies on the seven Project Impact pilot communities, the three most common partner types in the pilot communities were community-based business partners, partners from local branches of national chains or franchises, and federal government partners. These trends were, for the most part, also evident in the non-pilot study communities, with the notable exception that federal government partners were typically not a large partnership category in the non-pilot study communities. There were between zero and ten federal government partners in the non-pilot communities (an average of 2.3).

Table 3.2.2 provides an alternative perspective on the partnership numbers in Table 3.2.1 by showing the percentage of partners in each of the fourteen partner categories for each Project Impact site. The partnership type percentage information presented in Table 3.2.2

provides an important context for the numbers in Table 3.2.1. For example, Community F's three state government partners represent 16% of the community's nineteen total partners. In Community J, which has a total of ninety-two partnerships, three federal government partners represent only 3% of the community's total partners. Therefore, while Table 3.2.1 simply shows the number of partners in each of the partner type categories, Table 3.2.2 demonstrates how partnership networks are differentiated in the ten communities.

TABLE: 3.2.1: NUMBER OF PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERS BY SECTOR

| | Federal Government | State Government | County Government | City Government | Community-Based Businesses | Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises | Local Media | Trade and Industry Association | Non-Profit and Social-Service Based | Schools and Higher Education Related | Hospital and Health Care | Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations | Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions | Other | Totals |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Community A | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 22 |
| Community B | 3 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 72 |
| Community C | 1 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 35 |
| Community D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 25 |
| Community E | 3 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 25 |
| Community F | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Community G | 0 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 39 |
| Community H | 10 | 9 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 66 |
| Community I | 2 | 6 | 7 | 17 | 12 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 58 |
| Community J | 3 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 33 | 11 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 92 |
| Totals | 23 | 48 | 37 | 71 | 89 | 56 | 17 | 12 | 36 | 18 | 11 | 3 | 24 | 8 | 453 |

TABLE 3.2.2: PERCENTAGE OF PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERS BY SECTOR

| | Federal Government | State Government | County Government | City Government | Community-Based Businesses | Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises | Local Media | Trade and Industry Association | Non-Profit and Social-Service Based | Schools and Higher Education Related | Hospital and Health Care | Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations | Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions | Other |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Community A | 0 | 5 | 23 | 18 | 5 | 18 | 0 | 9 | 14 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Community B | 4 | 14 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 1 |
| Community C | 3 | 11 | 3 | 23 | 3 | 29 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Community D | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 | 4 | 24 | 0 | 8 | 24 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Community E | 12 | 20 | 0 | 12 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| Community F | 0 | 16 | 11 | 16 | 11 | 16 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community G | 0 | 5 | 15 | 13 | 33 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Community H | 15 | 14 | 6 | 15 | 20 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 2 |
| Community I | 3 | 10 | 12 | 29 | 21 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Community J | 3 | 8 | 8 | 14 | 36 | 12 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Totals | 5 | 11 | 8 | 16 | 20 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 |

3.3 Partnership Participation Patterns in the Non-pilot study communities

Information on the composition of Project Impact partnership networks by sector is presented in the pie charts contained in Figures 3.3.1-3.3.12. Figure 3.3.2 shows the total proportion of partners in each of the sector types in all non-pilot study communities. For purposes of comparison, Figure 3.3.2 shows modal partnership patterns across the seven pilot communities in the Year 2000, as reported in DRC's study on these communities. Figures 3.3.3-3.3.12 show the proportion of partners in each of the sector types by community.

As seen in Figure 3.2.2, representing the modal pattern in partnership distribution in the non-pilot study communities. Government partners (including federal government, state government, county government, and city government) account for 40% of the graph, the largest grouping of partners across the non-pilot study communities. Both business partners (community-based business partners and partners from local branches of national chains or franchises) and a collection of the remaining partners (including, most notably, non-profit and social-service based partners and partners from boards, commissions, and coalitions) represent roughly 30% of the chart.

Figures 3.3.3-3.3.12 show partnership network composition in each of the non-pilot study communities. Two of the ten communities, communities C (Figure 3.3.5) and F (Figure 3.3.8), have partnership networks that are very similar to the modal pattern. More specifically, the distribution of partners in Community C and Community F across the three above-mentioned groupings (government partners, business partners, and the

collection of remaining partners) resembles the modal distribution. However, the distribution of partners within these groups is different. Most notably, Community C has a larger concentration of partners from local branches of national chains or franchises than the modal pattern. Community F has no federal government partners.

The remaining non-pilot study communities are characterized by partnership distributions that vary considerably from the modal pattern. The partnership networks in communities A, H, and I are dominated by a high percentage of government partners (as shown in Figures 3.3.3, 3.3.10, and 3.3.11, respectively). Government partners represent 54% of the total distribution of partners in Community I, 50% of the total partnership network in Community H, and 46% of the partners in Community A.

Two of the non-pilot study communities (Community G and Community J) have a high percentage of business partners in their partnership networks (as shown in Figure 3.3.9 and 3.3.12, respectively). Business partners represent 48% of the partnership distribution in Community J, with community-based businesses accounting for the majority of the business group. Forty-six percent of the total partners in Community G are business partners, with the largest sector of this group being community-based businesses.

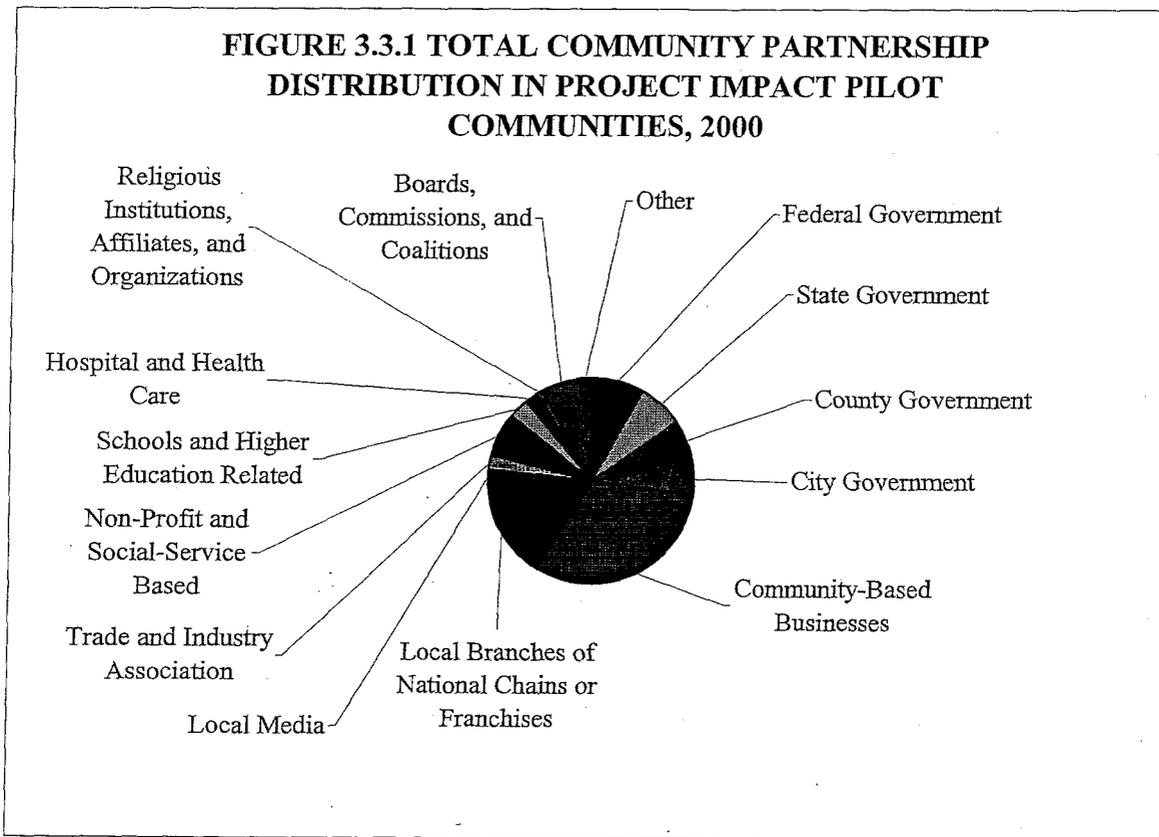


FIGURE 3.3.2 TOTAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

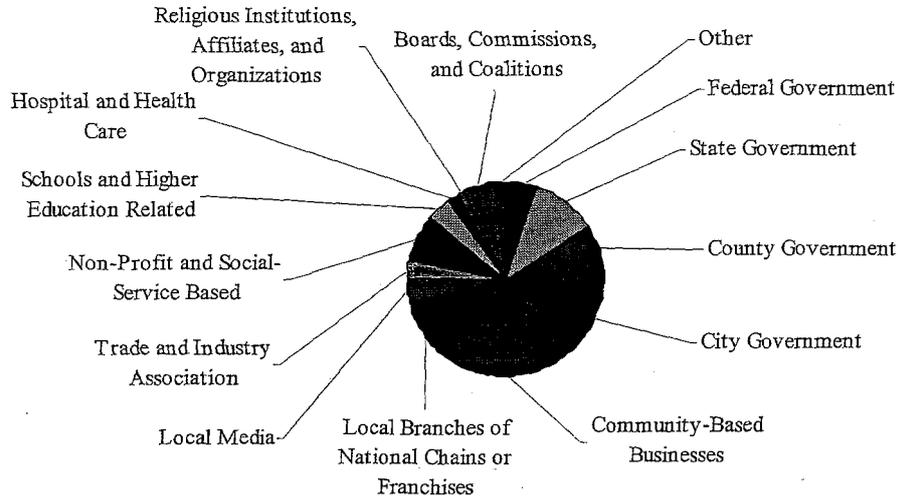


FIGURE 3.3.3 COMMUNITY A 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

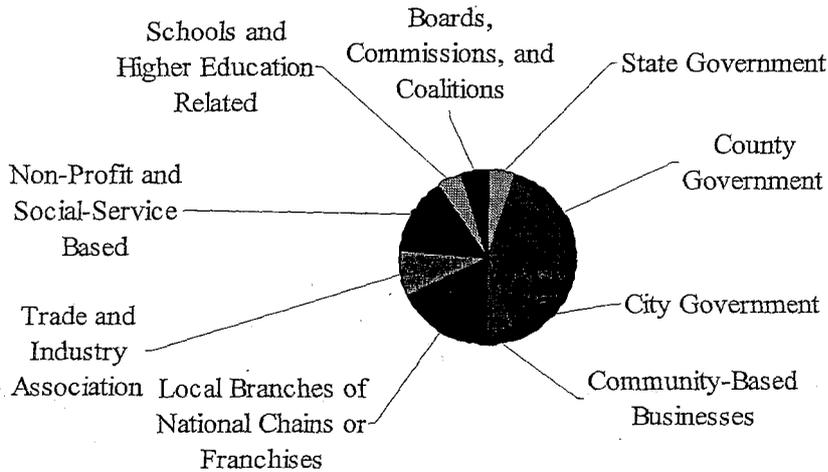


FIGURE 3.3.4 COMMUNITY B 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

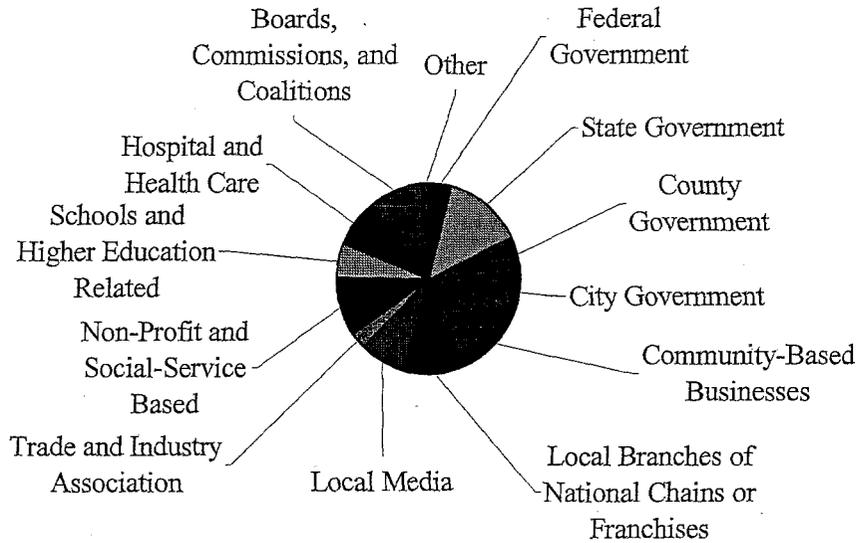


FIGURE 3.3.5 COMMUNITY C 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

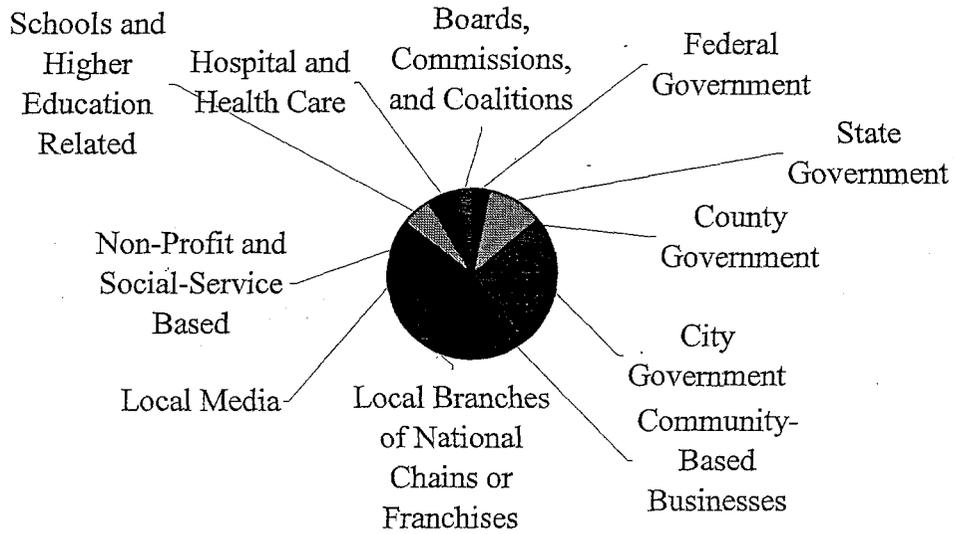


FIGURE 3.3.6 COMMUNITY D 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

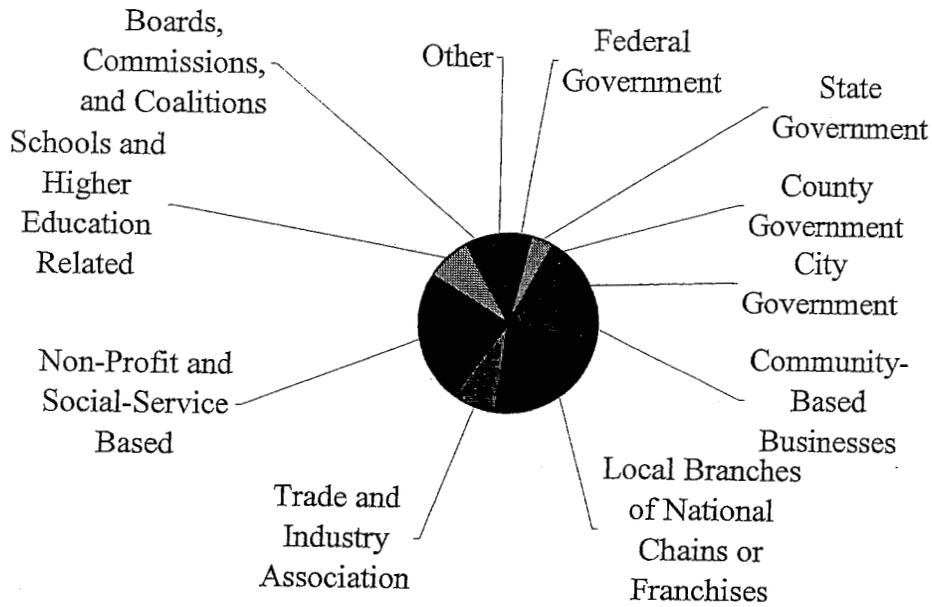


FIGURE 3.3.7 COMMUNITY E 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

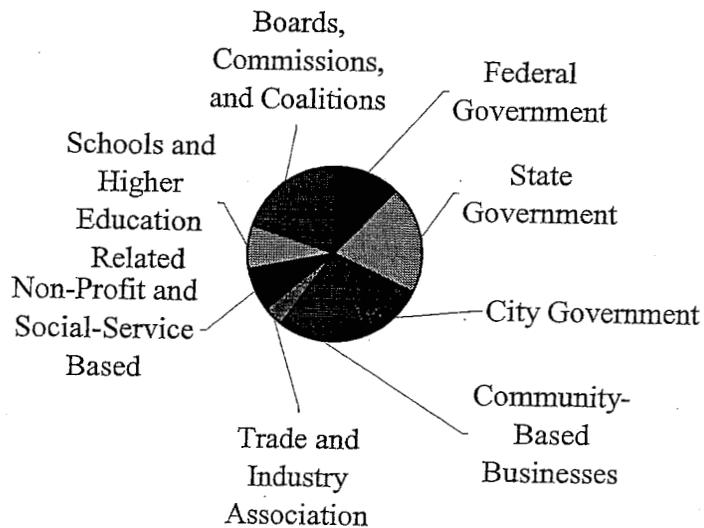


FIGURE 3.3.8 COMMUNITY F 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

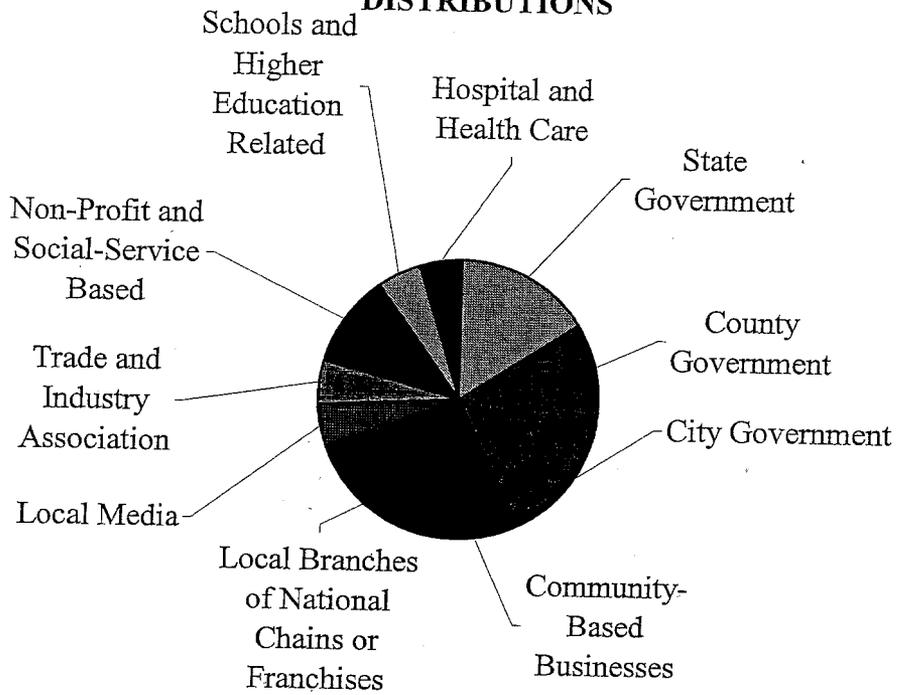


FIGURE 3.3.9 COMMUNITY G 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

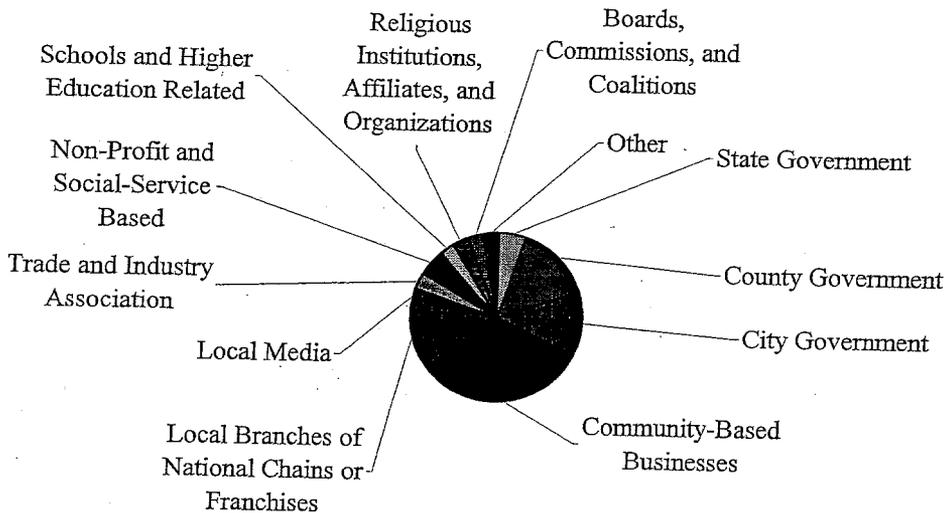


FIGURE 3.3.10 COMMUNITY H 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

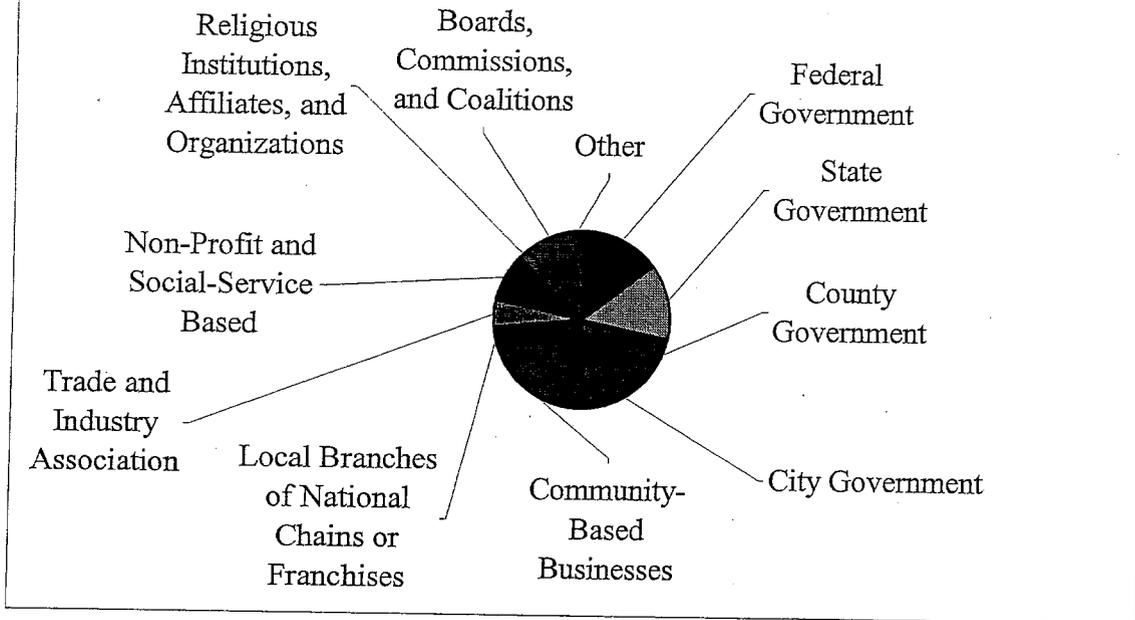


FIGURE 3.3.11 COMMUNITY I 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

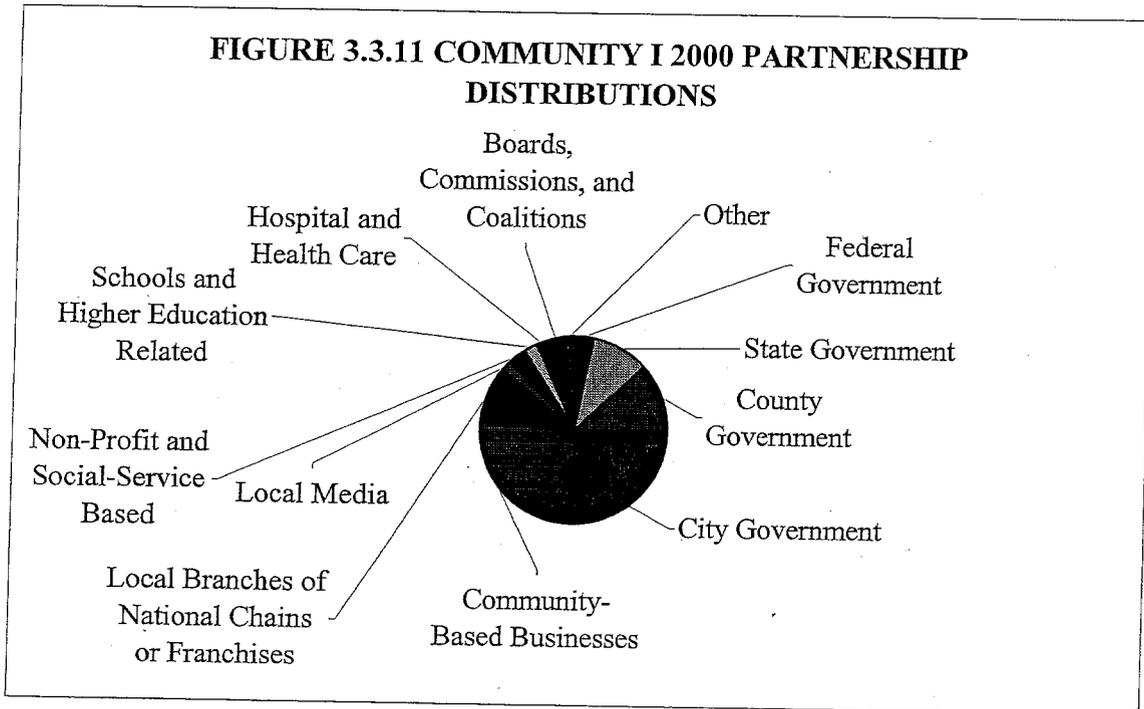
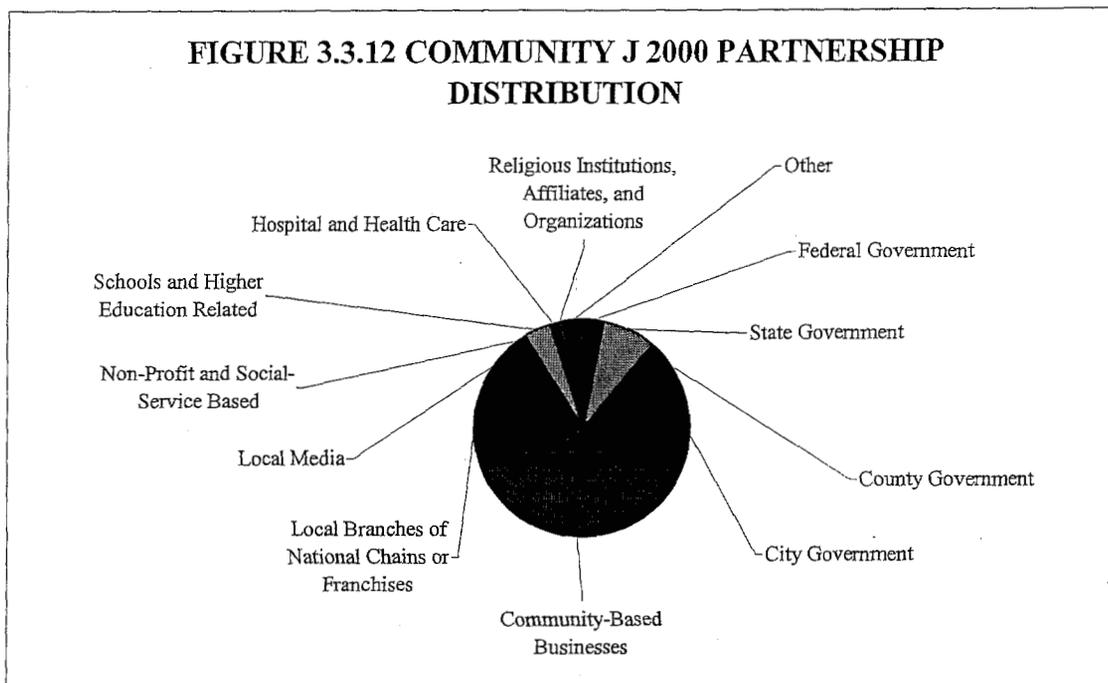


FIGURE 3.3.12 COMMUNITY J 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTION



The partnership networks in three of the non-pilot study communities (Community B, Community D, and Community E) are characterized by a high percentage of partners from the non-government and non-business group (as shown in Figures 3.3.4, 3.3.6, and 3.3.7, respectively). Forty-eight percent of the total partners in Community D are in this group, with half of these partners in the non-profit and social-service partner category. The non-government and non-business group accounts for 45% of the partners in Community B, with the largest concentrations from non-profit and social service based partners and partners from boards, commissions, and coalitions. Forty percent of the total partners in Community E belong to the non-government and non-business group, with partners from boards, commissions, and coalitions accounting for half of this group.

As Figure 3.3.1 shows, the proportion of partners in the seven pilot communities in the year 2000 is, for the most part, similar to the modal pattern that was reported in the ten non-pilot study communities. The most notable differences between the two charts is a larger percentage of city government partners and partners from local branches of national chains or franchises in the non-pilot study communities. In addition, community-based business partners are a less notable factor in the modal pattern of the non-pilot study communities.

The tables and pie charts on non-pilot study community network composition contain several important types of information on local Project Impact networks. First, they show that partnership networks are diverse, encompassing a range of types of agencies and organizations, as well as different governmental levels. Second, they indicate that the types of organizations that were initially targeted by Project Impact for involvement in community-based education efforts—businesses, particularly locally-based ones—are indeed taking part in Project Impact in significant numbers. Additionally, the charts and tables also identify sectors within the non-pilot study communities that are not yet well

represented in most Project Impact efforts, such as non-profits, social-service organizations, and religious organizations. Project Impact is clearly doing well in encouraging its initial target audience to take part in local loss-reduction efforts. These findings on partnership network composition point to the need for additional outreach to other, less represented community organizations.

3.4 Partner Activity

Partners vary in the extent to which they can be considered actively involved in Project Impact. Table 3.4.1 shows the total number of active partners in the non-pilot study communities. As stated earlier, community respondents were asked to rank the activity levels of the partners in their community on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “not at all active” and 5 indicating “quite active.” For analysis purposes, partners that were ranked by any community respondent as a 3, 4, or 5 (“moderately active,” “quite active,” or “very active”) were considered active in the Project Impact initiative in that community.

General Patterns in Partner Activity

TABLE 3.4.1 TOTAL ACTIVE PARTNERS BY COMMUNITY

| | Total Partners | Total Active Partners | Percentage of Active Partners |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Community A | 22 | 17 | 77 |
| Community B | 72 | 48 | 67 |
| Community C | 35 | 22 | 63 |
| Community D | 25 | 22 | 88 |
| Community E | 25 | 15 | 60 |
| Community F | 19 | 15 | 79 |
| Community G | 39 | 18 | 46 |
| Community H | 66 | 52 | 79 |
| Community I | 58 | 50 | 86 |
| Community J | 92 | 76 | 83 |
| Totals | 453 | 335 | 74 |

As Table 3.4.1 indicates, three hundred thirty-five of the four hundred fifty-three total partners were considered active, totaling 74% of the total number of partners in the non-pilot study communities. There was a high degree of variation in the general activity level of the non-pilot study communities. While Community D, Community I, and Community J reported high levels of partner activity in their communities (88%, 86%, and 83%, respectively), only 46% of the partners in Community G were considered active. The remaining six non-pilot communities reported activity levels that ranged from 63% to 79%. Interestingly, the number of partners in a community has no discernable impact on activity level, as Table 3.4.1 demonstrates. In other words, communities that have fewer partners involved in the Project Impact initiative are no more likely to have a high percentage of active partners than those communities that have a high overall number of partners.

Partner Activity Levels in the Non-Pilot Study Communities by Sector

Tables 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 provide a more complete profile of partner activity levels in the non-pilot study communities. While Table 3.4.1 focuses on the activity levels of all of the partners in the communities, Table 3.4.2 shows the number of active partners in each of the fourteen partner categories. The information in Table 3.4.2 is interpreted as percentages in Table 3.4.3.

The percentages in Table 3.4.3 should be considered within the context of the real numbers presented in Table 3.4.2 because the percentage data could be misleading if examined apart from the information in Table 3.4.2. According to Table 3.4.3, for example, 100% of Community J's hospital and health care partners were considered active. In that same community, 100% of the city government partners were active. When examined separately from the information in Table 3.4.2, these two percentages appear to have an equal degree of significance. However, further investigation reveals that Community J had thirteen city government partners and only one hospital and health care partner.

TABLE 3.4.2: TOTAL ACTIVE PARTNERS BY SECTOR

| | Federal Government | State Government | County Government | City Government | Community-Based Businesses | Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises | Local Media | Trade and Industry Association | Non-Profit and Social-Service Based | Schools and Higher Education Related | Hospital and Health Care | Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations | Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions | Other | Totals |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Community A | - | 1/1 | 5/5 | 2/4 | 1/1 | 2/4 | - | 2/2 | 3/3 | 1/1 | - | - | 1/1 | - | 17/22 |
| Community B | 2/3 | 3/10 | 4/4 | 5/5 | 8/9 | 5/8 | 4/6 | 2/2 | 4/7 | 4/4 | 1/6 | - | 5/7 | 1/1 | 48/72 |
| Community C | 0/1 | 3/4 | 1/1 | 6/8 | 1/1 | 4/10 | 0/1 | - | 3/4 | 2/2 | 1/2 | - | 1/1 | - | 22/35 |
| Community D | 1/1 | 1/1 | 1/1 | 3/3 | 0/1 | 5/6 | - | 2/2 | 6/6 | 2/2 | - | - | 0/1 | 1/1 | 22/25 |
| Community E | 3/3 | 2/5 | - | 2/3 | 3/4 | - | - | 0/1 | 1/2 | 0/2 | - | - | 4/5 | - | 15/25 |
| Community F | - | 3/3 | 2/2 | 3/3 | 2/2 | 2/3 | 0/1 | 0/1 | 2/2 | 0/1 | 1/1 | - | - | - | 15/19 |
| Community G | - | 1/2 | 5/6 | 2/5 | 4/13 | 1/5 | 0/1 | 0/1 | 2/2 | 1/1 | - | 1/1 | 0/1 | 1/1 | 18/39 |
| Community H | 8/10 | 7/9 | 2/4 | 7/10 | 11/13 | 3/3 | - | 3/3 | 4/6 | - | - | 1/1 | 5/6 | 1/1 | 52/66 |
| Community I | 2/2 | 6/6 | 7/7 | 17/17 | 7/12 | 4/6 | 1/1 | - | 2/2 | 0/1 | 1/1 | - | 2/2 | 1/1 | 50/58 |
| Community J | 2/3 | 7/7 | 7/7 | 13/13 | 27/33 | 8/11 | 7/7 | - | 2/2 | 1/4 | 1/1 | 1/1 | - | 3/3 | 76/92 |
| Totals | 18/23 | 31/48 | 34/37 | 60/71 | 64/89 | 34/56 | 12/17 | 9/12 | 29/36 | 11/18 | 5/11 | 3/3 | 18/24 | 8/8 | 335/453 |

The dashes in Table 3.4.2 represent the absence of partners in the partner type categories.

TABLE 3.4.3: PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE PARTNERS COMPARED TO TOTAL PARTNERS BY SECTOR

| | Federal Government | State Government | County Government | City Government | Community-Based Businesses | Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises | Local Media | Trade and Industry Association | Non-Profit and Social-Service Based | Schools and Higher Education Related | Hospital and Health Care | Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations | Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions | Other | Totals |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Community A | - | 100 | 100 | 50 | 100 | 50 | - | 100 | 100 | 100 | - | - | 100 | - | 82 |
| Community B | 67 | 30 | 100 | 100 | 89 | 63 | 67 | 100 | 57 | 100 | 17 | - | 71 | 100 | 67 |
| Community C | 0 | 75 | 100 | 75 | 100 | 40 | 0 | - | 75 | 100 | 50 | - | 100 | - | 63 |
| Community D | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 83 | - | 100 | 100 | 100 | - | - | 0 | 100 | 88 |
| Community E | 100 | 40 | - | 67 | 75 | - | - | 0 | 50 | 0 | - | - | 80 | - | 60 |
| Community F | - | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 | - | - | - | 79 |
| Community G | - | 50 | 83 | 40 | 31 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | - | 100 | 0 | 100 | 46 |
| Community H | 80 | 78 | 50 | 70 | 85 | 100 | - | 100 | 67 | - | - | 100 | 83 | 100 | 79 |
| Community I | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 58 | 67 | 100 | - | 100 | 0 | 100 | - | 100 | 100 | 86 |
| Community J | 67 | 57 | 100 | 100 | 82 | 73 | 100 | - | 100 | 25 | 100 | 100 | - | 100 | 83 |
| Totals | 78 | 65 | 92 | 85 | 72 | 61 | 71 | 75 | 81 | 61 | 45 | 100 | 75 | 100 | 74 |

The dashes in Table 3.4.3 represent the absence of partners in the partner type categories.

In DRC's assessment of the Project Impact pilot communities, partner activity was charted over time, making it possible to discern changes in participation levels of partners in the pilot communities. Because this is the first year of DRC's study on the non-pilot communities, it is not possible to assess change. Rather, the emphasis is on discerning patterns in what can be considered baseline data on these Project Impact sites.

Two main patterns were evident in the data. First, the number of partners in a community appears to have had no correlation with the activity level of the community's partners. In other words, communities that had a relatively small number of partners do not seem to have a greater degree of partner involvement. The four communities in which partner activity levels were 80% or higher (Community A, Community D, Community I, and Community J) had varying numbers of partners (22 partners, 25 partners, 58 partners, and 92 partners, respectively). Therefore, partnership network size appears to have been unrelated to individual partner activity.

Second, for all non-pilot communities, the large majority of the partner categories had high levels of activity, with one exception. One category, partners from hospitals and health care organizations, had an activity level that was below 50% (largely because only one of the six partners from hospitals and health care organizations in Community B was considered active). However, the remaining total partner categories had partner activity

levels that varied from 61% (partners from local branches of national chains or franchises) to 100% (both partners from religious institutions, affiliates, and organizations and the “other” partner category). In other words, there was no indication that some types of partners are consistently less active than others.

Comparisons between Non-Pilot Study Communities and Pilot Study Communities

The partnership data from the non-pilot study communities can be compared to the data collected from the Project Impact pilot communities in the year 2000. Table 3.4.4 shows the total active partners by sector in both the non-pilot study communities and the pilot communities. Table 3.4.5 shows an alternate view of this data by providing the numbers in Table 3.4.4 in percentage form. For example, Table 3.4.4 indicates that eighteen of the twenty-three total federal government partners were considered active in the non-pilot communities, while Table 3.4.5 shows that 78% of the federal government partners were active in the non-pilot study communities. In other words, the two tables are providing alternate perspectives on the same data. As with the previous partner tables that utilized the same data, the two tables should be interpreted in concert with one another.

As indicated in the tables, the quantitative data on partnerships that were collected in the studies are very similar. The non-pilot study communities had an average of forty-five partners; roughly thirty-four of these partners were considered active. In the year 2000, the pilot communities had an average of approximately fifty partners, of which roughly thirty-five partners were considered active. While this indicates that partnership activity was slightly higher in the non-pilot study communities than the pilot communities (respectively, a 74% activity rate and a 70% activity rate), the data are quite consistent on average.

TABLE 3.4.4: TOTAL ACTIVE PARTNERS BY SECTOR, NON-PILOT STUDY COMMUNITY TOTALS AND PILOT COMMUNITY TOTALS

| | Federal Government | State Government | County Government | City Government | Community-Based Businesses | Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises | Local Media | Trade and Industry Association | Non-Profit and Social-Service Based | Schools and Higher Education Related | Hospital and Health Care | Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations | Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions | Other | Totals |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Totals-Non-Pilot Study Communities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | 18/23 | 31/48 | 34/37 | 60/71 | 64/89 | 34/56 | 12/17 | 9/12 | 29/36 | 11/18 | 5/11 | 3/3 | 18/24 | 8/8 | 335/453 |
| Totals-Pilot Study Communities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | 26/39 | 23/27 | 23/23 | 10/11 | 65/80 | 43/61 | 7/9 | 5/9 | 17/23 | 12/12 | 6/6 | 1/3 | 12/17 | 4/8 | 254/328 |
| 2000 | 19/28 | 22/25 | 17/26 | 14/17 | 73/110 | 46/56 | 7/8 | 3/8 | 13/25 | 9/11 | 6/8 | 1/4 | 12/20 | 4/6 | 246/352 |

TABLE 3.4.5: PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE PARTNERS COMPARED TO TOTAL PARTNERS BY SECTOR, NON-PILOT STUDY COMMUNITY TOTALS AND PILOT STUDY COMMUNITY TOTALS

| | Federal Government | State Government | County Government | City Government | Community-Based Businesses | Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises | Local Media | Trade and Industry Association | Non-Profit and Social-Service Based | Schools and Higher Education Related | Hospital and Health Care | Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations | Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions | Other | Totals |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Totals-Non-Pilot Study Communities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | 78 | 65 | 92 | 85 | 72 | 61 | 71 | 75 | 81 | 61 | 45 | 100 | 75 | 100 | 74 |
| Totals -Pilot Study Communities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | 67 | 85 | 100 | 91 | 81 | 70 | 78 | 56 | 74 | 100 | 100 | 33 | 71 | 50 | 77 |
| 2000 | 68 | 88 | 65 | 82 | 66 | 82 | 88 | 38 | 52 | 82 | 75 | 25 | 60 | 67 | 70 |

Table 3.4.5 reflects the same differences that were observed in the partnership activity levels in non-pilot and pilot communities. A number of partner sectors are more active in the non-pilot study communities, in particular, federal government partners; county government partners; partners from trade and industry associations; non-profit and social-service based partners; partners from religious institutions, affiliates, and organizations; partners from boards, commissions, and coalitions; and the general "other partners" category. Conversely, in the aggregate, pilot communities reported greater levels of activity with respect to the following partners: state government partners; partners from local branches of national chains or franchises; local media partners; schools and higher-education related partners; and hospital and health care partners.

Despite the differences in partnership activity levels in the different partner sectors, the general data from the pilot and non-pilot studies are largely similar. This suggests that the two study groups had similar success rates in attracting partners to the initiative and maintaining active partnerships. It should be noted that these data represent aggregate groupings. Based on other analyses it is known that variations exist in partnership network size and activity across both pilot and non-pilot communities.

The similarity between the data sets is interesting in light of the fact that the pilot communities were afforded more time to develop their initiatives and received more funding and attention from FEMA. However, it is possible that newer Project Impact communities have been able to attract and maintain partnerships because of the foundation that was established both by the pilot communities and by the overall national initiative. Quite simply, the pilot communities were the "demonstration communities" for the initiative. The communities that entered the initiative in the latter years of Project Impact were able to learn valuable lessons from the pilot communities. Similarly, the development of the Project Impact program may have fundamentally changed FEMA's

approach to developing partnerships in newer Project Impact communities. Additionally, the number of and quality of national partnerships likely improved over time.

4. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TOWARDS DISASTER RESISTANCE

4.1 Introduction

The development of partnerships is an essential ingredient for Project Impact progress and ultimately for the success of the initiative. Partnerships provide important resources to the initiative as well as an opportunity to educate both the private sector and the general public about disasters and mitigation measures. They also serve as vehicles for leveraging federal dollars and for mobilizing stakeholder and political support for the initiative.

The discussions that follow will examine the strategies utilized by the non-pilot communities to maintain existing partnerships and attract new partners. They will also detail what informants believe are the most important contributions that partners make to the program. Also discussed are informants' insights on their communities' successes and shortcomings in building partnerships both with large corporations and small businesses, as well as efforts to build partnerships with community organizations and groups representing vulnerable populations. Finally, the section will discuss one community's experiences in building partnerships with tribal communities.

4.2 Maintaining Existing Partnerships

This section will provide an overview of comments on partnering that were made by interviewees from the ten non-pilot study communities. These informants overwhelmingly stressed the importance of developing a range of active partners. During the interviews with community representatives, informants were asked to discuss specific strategies that they used to maintain partnerships in their communities. This information on community strategies was analytically classified into four categories: an active Project Impact initiative; the tailoring of Project Impact activities to specific partners; the importance of "windows of opportunity" to push the partnership-building agenda of Project Impact; and the recognition of partner efforts.

Multiple respondents stressed the importance of an active community outreach initiative in maintaining existing partnerships. The informants noted that an active Project Impact initiative encourages the participation of both partners and community members. The study participants noted a number of strategies to promote an active program image. First, regular meetings with partners serve to promote the agenda of Project Impact. In addition, these meetings project the image that the project is accomplishing various goals. Second, an active advertising campaign can promote interest in partners and the general public. A Project Impact coordinator stated that he was trying to build community interest in the initiative by continuing to push the Project Impact logo until it enters the public mindset. The coordinator discussed the importance of establishing the "brand" of disaster mitigation:

When people see [the Project Impact logo], we want them to say, 'Oh, that's disaster mitigation.' But, on the other hand, some people think, 'Well, that's just another federal program that will come and go--whatever.' But you have to believe in something or you have to have an idol or a logo or a mascot. So, we're kind of using this for that [level of recognition.]

Third, partners stressed the importance of receiving continual updates on the initiative. The communities mentioned a number of strategies for meeting with partners in order to update them on the initiative's progress. Clearly, regular meetings with partners can establish a consistent pattern of communication with partners. One respondent stated that the Project Impact coordinator or another representative from the initiative should regularly attend meetings held by partners in order to ensure more lasting ties with partnerships.

The Project Impact study communities also noted that partnerships can be maintained through the effective management of activities. This process includes prioritizing the projects that fall under the Project Impact initiative and selecting partners that may be particularly well suited to the project's needs. Several respondents stressed the importance of developing a Project Impact initiative that reflects the talents of different partners. Quite often, this management strategy required developing or changing activities or programs to incorporate the specific interests, talents, and services that partners can provide to the initiative. This strategy takes into account the fact that a partner is more likely to become an active member of Project Impact when an activity has been developed with a clear vision of the partners' involvement. A Project Impact coordinator described this process:

We found that with businesses and partners what you have to do is design something for them to do and then ask for [their assistance]. So, when we had these maps, [we said,] 'Okay, we want you to do this for the map project.' When we had the regional meeting, we wanted the engineering firms to make presentations at the meeting and we wanted them to donate money to us and they did it. So you have to be very specific about what you're going to do with your partnerships.

A coordinator from another community also stressed the virtues of strong management of partnerships:

Probably the biggest thing we've done is when we've [developed] new projects to try to make those projects specific to certain partners. We've tried to develop projects where we can greatly benefit from their services. Then that way we have a purpose or a reason for them to be there.

The study communities also indicated that disaster events in the communities can help to maintain interest in Project Impact. According to this perspective, disaster events create “windows of opportunity” to change perceptions of mitigation and disaster preparedness. Because there is a greater degree of attention on disaster issues immediately following a disaster event, both the public and private industry are more inclined to participate in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures. While informants did note that national or international disaster events can perform this function, they believe local disaster events most effectively demonstrate the importance of the Project Impact initiative. A partner from a Project Impact community commented on the importance of a local history of vulnerability in developing and maintaining partnerships:

[If] we're hit by tornadoes every other year or every year, you know it's very probable that a local business and everybody would have an interest in making sure [they are prepared]. Yes, we had a flood here not long ago, and we flood all of the time. You know, everyone can understand that and they are taking flood plain management steps. It's not something that's hard to prepare for....Those are ways that you can tie people in. You got to go to them and say, 'We're going to do this in our community, are you interested in being involved?'

Finally, representatives from the Project Impact study communities noted the importance of recognizing the efforts of partners. Indeed, a key attraction for partners to the Project Impact initiative is the positive impact that the program can have on the organization's image. According to several informants, partners were acknowledged through awards ceremonies, publicity events, and media sources. One Project Impact coordinator discussed the role that media exposure for partners has played in maintaining partners:

The media...helped provide reinforcement. We also had, the commissioners have awarded recognition for some of the businesses and contributors, to help Project Impact get going. And, you know, that's something that keeps the people pretty motivated. When they see the work being done and they see that recognition. They hear of it on the radio and the newspaper, and then they see how well it works during the flood.

A representative from another Project Impact community stressed the importance of partner recognition. In his community, active partners were featured in a television program on Project Impact. As the representative observed:

We videotaped them and we played it back over our local TV station. So [the partners] got a lot more business, more profit. You get a lot of mileage out of it, a lot of press coverage. I think that's what's keeping [partner involvement] going, keeping the initiatives of Project Impact visible.

The strategies to maintain partnerships that were identified by the non-pilot study communities were very similar to the strategies the Disaster Research Center found were being utilized by the pilot communities in 2000. Both study groups recognized the importance of regular meetings with partners, effective management of activities and partners, “windows of opportunity,” and partner recognition.

4.3 Developing New Partnerships

In addition to maintaining their existing partner networks, the non-pilot communities have also focused actively on developing relationships with new partners. Interviewees mentioned two basic strategies that they have utilized to mobilize new partners: building on the basis of existing relationships with businesses and organizations, and identifying and then actively seeking new businesses or organizations to recruit into the Project Impact initiative.

Informants noted that the most effective method to attract new partners into the initiative is to utilize the existing networks of businesses and organizations in the community. These networks included businesses and organizations that are already involved in the local emergency management network, such as the local emergency planning committees that have been set up to manage chemical hazards. Other partners were involved in the local chamber of commerce or neighborhood associations. Study informants also indicated that personal contacts were tapped in order to develop new partnerships.

Community representatives mentioned a number of strategies that they utilized in order to recruit partners that have not been involved in the Project Impact initiative or in other local programs or agencies that promote disaster resistance. Quite often, respondents indicated that they developed a “wish list” of potential participants. Using this list, a member of the initiative (typically the Project Impact coordinator) would contact the businesses in an attempt to bring in new partners. Several respondents noted that they would then visit these organizations in order to “pitch” the Project Impact program. Less formally, in one case potential partners were recruited through a Project Impact kiosk at a local fair or shopping area.

As noted above, partners were also approached because of a need for specific services or other resources that they could bring to the Project Impact initiative. A Project Impact

coordinator from one community believed so strongly in this strategy that he only approached partners that could specifically contribute to certain projects. The coordinator contended that partners that were not contributing to projects were not beneficial to the initiative. In his view, the presence of “unnecessary partners” only served to waste the coordinator’s time and, in effect, weaken the entire initiative. As he contended:

There’s no limit to the number of partners. Anybody can be a partner. But there’s a cost to being a partner, not necessarily in dollars. But if there is a partner, I need to do something with that partner. I mean, I have to communicate with them. I need to keep them informed about projects that are going on. I need to attempt to get them involved. There’s a cost in time, even if not in dollars, for every partner you put on the plate. So, if they’re not adding value, then there’s no reason to add them to the list. Now, that’s where I think I part company with FEMA. They think the more partners the better, but I don’t have time to hold all those hands.

Network ties were continually mentioned as a key vehicle for partner recruitment. Community informants were clearly more comfortable approaching businesses or organizations that had pre-existing relationships with Project Impact or emergency management-related activities in the community than simply “cold-calling” potential partners. Quite often, the process of contacting new recruits was considered too time-consuming or frustrating for partners. Because of these difficulties, several community representatives lamented the lack of “fresh faces” in the initiative. This trend was also evident in the pilot communities, suggesting that developing new partnerships is a central challenge of Project Impact. As one respondent whose community has had difficulty in bringing in new partners observed:

A lot of the people who are involved or got involved in the steering committee were people who were doing this already and had already been working with other people on the steering committee...They may not have all gotten together as part of one committee to meet monthly or every other month to discuss these things but they were already cooperating to various degrees on emergency management and mitigation. One of the priorities...for Project Impact nationally and for us locally is to involve businesses and citizens in a decision-making process in getting them to think more about mitigation. I mean I can't say how successful we have been at that...One thing we always talk about whenever we talk about how to improve Project Impact here is that we need to get more businesses involved. From what I have read from other Project Impact communities, I think this is a universal [challenge].

4.4 Partner Contributions

The respondents from the non-pilot study communities indicated that partnerships provide many key resources to the Project Impact initiative. Even though each of the communities has developed a unique initiative and, consequently, distinctive relationships with its partners, there was a general consensus among interviewees on the most important resources that their partners provide.

Partner contributions can be classified into nine categories: expertise, in-kind donations; money; knowledge, time, labor, facilities, ideas, and leadership. Table 4.4.1 lists these categories by the number of mentions they received in community informant interviews.

TABLE 4.4.1 KEY RESOURCES THAT PARTNERS PROVIDE TO THE PROJECT IMPACT INITIATIVE

| Resources | Number of Mentions |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Expertise | 6 |
| In-Kind Donations | 5 |
| Money | 4 |
| Knowledge | 4 |
| Time | 4 |
| Labor | 3 |
| Facilities | 2 |
| Ideas | 2 |
| Leadership | 2 |

It should be noted that these seven general categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, it is safe to assume that a partner that provides time to Project Impact also

provides personnel to the initiative. Similarly, the contribution of labor to the initiative suggests that the partner also donated their time to the initiative. The list of key resources incorporates the most common responses in the study interviews, rather than a more analytical interpretation of responses.

The list of key resources is interesting because it includes a mix of what might be termed “hard” and “soft” resources. Hard resources can be considered actual products or services that were donated to the initiative, such as money, in-kind donations, the use of organizational facilities, and labor. Soft resources include expertise, knowledge, time, and leadership. In the pilot communities, soft resources were cited as the most common resources that partners provide. Resources that were more dependent upon funding assistance, such as in-kind and financial donations, featured less prominently in our respondents’ answers. Beyond this primary difference, the pilot and non-pilot study communities largely listed similar key resources.

4.5 Building Partnerships with Large Corporations

Several community respondents stressed the value of building partnerships with large corporations. As demonstrated in Table 4.2.2 in the preceding section, partners from national chains or franchises represent the third largest group of partners in the non-pilot communities, after community-based business partners and city government partners. Large corporations thus represent a significant percentage of the partnerships in most pilot communities. Some of the large corporate partners in the pilot communities also participate as national partners in Project Impact.

Many interviewees stated that large corporations are quite often an important source of support in terms of volunteering time, contributing in-kind donations, and providing assistance to projects. As respondents observed, large corporations are more likely than smaller, locally-based businesses to have individuals who occupy formal organizational positions related to emergency management; thus, “champions” of the Project Impact initiative may be easier to locate in large corporations. Larger companies also typically have community-relations activities in place to guide their relationships with various types of community programs. Due in part to this community focus as well as to their larger resource base and overall profitability, large corporations can donate significant amounts of materials and products to Project Impact. Because of the larger workforce size of large corporations, employees from these companies are typically in a better position to donate their time and services to the initiative.

The non-pilot study communities listed two primary difficulties that they experienced in recruiting large business partners. First, some respondents observed that it was difficult to gain the attention of large corporations because their headquarters were typically not located in their communities. Second, many of the smaller communities indicated that they had no large corporations. A representative from a rural community offered an alternate view of the difficulties of working with large corporations:

I think, unfortunately, when a larger corporation signs on and wants to contribute money, it's generally to a larger community or a base so it can get national attention....I think it's great when we start having some of the larger corporations come in with some programs that we can use for Project Impact communities nationwide. That's where FEMA can really do some magic with the larger corporations. When you're talking a small county government trying to work with a large corporation that's not in the community, it's pretty difficult.

4.6 Building Partnerships with Small Businesses

Community-based businesses represented the most significant partnership sector in the non-pilot communities (see Table 4.2.2). Accordingly, an important element of a successful Project Impact initiative is a strong relationship with businesses in the community.

Three of the ten non-pilot study communities reported that they have developed strong partnerships with small businesses. This largely reflects the trends seen in the year 2000 pilot community report, where only two communities indicated that they were successful in building small business partnerships. These communities listed a number of reasons why they were successful in building strong relationships with local businesses. Some communities considered it easier to establish a relationship with community-based businesses. Because of this, they reported a greater level of success in receiving donations of materials, labor, and funds. One community indicated that, because of the direct contact between the Project Impact initiative and decision-makers in local businesses, it was easier to determine if the relationship would prove fruitful. In addition, a community noted that it was easier to sustain momentum with community-based businesses than with larger corporations. Once again, this perceived benefit was attributed to the more direct relationship that could exist between the initiative and businesses.

The majority of the communities had been largely unsuccessful in developing strong relationships with community-based businesses. As discussed above in the section on "Building Partnerships with Large Corporations," large corporations are typically more able to contribute in-kind donations, materials, and financial assistance to Project Impact programs than local businesses. Quite simply, even though there are many more small businesses than large ones because the pool of resources (such as materials, product, and money) available to most community businesses is relatively modest, community-based business partners are typically unable to make large contributions to Project Impact.

It was also noted that community-based businesses have a shortage of "people power" to volunteer their efforts and knowledge to Project Impact. Because community-based businesses typically have just enough employees to perform organizational duties, there are rarely employees with the time or resources to devote to a community program. In

addition, community-based businesses are less likely than large corporations to have disaster plans in place or employees whose jobs focus on safety issues. As a result, there is quite often not an obvious contact person in small businesses.

4.7 Building Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations and Groups Representing Vulnerable Populations

In addition to building partnerships with “conventional” partner types such as businesses and governmental organizations, Project Impact representatives noted the importance of establishing positive relationships with groups representing vulnerable populations in their communities. Occasionally, these relationships developed into formal partnerships, as reflected in our data on non-profit and social service-based partners.

Community representatives were asked if they were addressing the needs of particularly vulnerable populations in their communities. Table 4.7.1 shows whether or not the pilot communities indicated that they are addressing the needs of the following populations and groups: the elderly, low-income populations, day care centers, hospices, physically or mentally challenged segments of the population, ethnic minorities, the homeless, and battered women’s shelters.

Nine of the ten non-pilot sites acknowledged the special needs of the elderly population in their communities. These efforts include making presentations to senior centers and nursing homes, assessing adult care facilities for safety and disaster preparedness, installing generators in senior houses and community centers, and distributing fans and air conditioners during the summer. Several respondents indicated that their communities were in the process of compiling lists of where elderly residents live so as to develop hazard mitigation plans specific to this group. One community offered an innovative example of ways to maintain open lines of communication with the elderly population. This community used what the respondent termed an “Are You Okay?” computer to check on elderly individuals at regularly scheduled times when they are in their homes. This respondent elaborates:

I have ninety-seven people on there now that have applied for the program, which is good because that runs us all day long. I have seven volunteers that call twice per day on the weekends for people that do not have any family and want a weekend call. The program does not run Saturday and Sunday, so we have volunteers that do that calling for us on the weekend and they know what to do in case an emergency happens.

TABLE 4.7.1 VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED BY PROJECT IMPACT ACTIVITIES

| Community | Elderly | Low-Income | Day Cares | Physically or Mentally Challenged | Ethnic Minorities | Battered Women | Homeless |
|-------------|---------|------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------|
| Community A | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Community B | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Community C | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Community D | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Community E | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Community F | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Community G | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Community H | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Community I | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Community J | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |

Eight of the non-pilot communities indicated that they have addressed the unique needs of low-income populations. Activities targeted at this segment of the community that were discussed by informants include installation of “safer rooms” in some homes, and installation of “safe rooms” in community centers or other places where people might be inclined to congregate in the event of a disaster.

Respondents from five of the study communities indicated that they have taken steps to address the needs of day care centers in their communities. Community representatives mentioned a number of projects that targeted day care centers, including the anchoring of bookcases and the application of a clear film to windows to prevent shattering. An informant from Community 8 indicated that, although the community had not yet done anything to specifically target day care facilities, Project Impact does plan to reach out to these organizations in the future.

Five of the non-pilot sites indicated that they have addressed the needs of physically or mentally challenged members of their communities. One community instituted a computer database to better meet the agencies to ensure that physically or mentally challenged people of all ages would be visited regularly. One community informant discussed the use of adult day care facilities in the community, while another spoke of attempts to keep track of where members of this group live so as to develop appropriate mitigation measures. The Project Impact Coordinator from Community 2 suggested that the lack of attention to this population in the community was the product of a contrast between the existing community-wide philosophy and the ideals of Project Impact. According to the Coordinator, organizations in Community 2 have not worked to develop evacuation plans or offer educational programs because they generally believe that the family is responsible for meeting the needs of relatives who are physically or mentally challenged. The Coordinator did stress, however, that Project Impact is attempting to deal with this issue.

Five of the ten non-pilot communities had undertaken steps to address the needs of ethnic minorities. An informant from Community 6 suggested that, although there had not been

any direct attempts to tailor activities to the majority community, there was an awareness of the needs of members of the community's ethnic minority population. The informant cited language barriers and a general lack of disaster awareness among ethnic minorities as two of the primary obstacles to integrating this group into the initiative.

There is consistency between the ten non-pilot communities and the Year Three assessment of the pilot communities with regard to the general emphasis on vulnerable segments of the population. In both cases, the elderly residents, low-income groups, day care centers, and the physically or mentally challenged received the bulk of the resources and attention directed to vulnerable populations. Conversely, the homeless and battered women's groups received little, if any, support through Project Impact in either the pilot or non-pilot communities.

Even among those communities that discussed attempts to reach out to these underserved segments of the community, there do not appear to be many activities geared toward meeting the unique needs of these populations. Communities seem to think that targeting a certain geographic area is sufficient and that they do not need to look at special needs issues. The general belief in these communities is that disasters affect everyone equally, although the literature indicates this is not so. One potential solution is to incorporate groups that represent the segments of the population with special needs into the Project Impact process. However, when this possibility was posed to respondents, most indicated that they view vulnerable segments of the community solely as recipients of assistance, not as active contributors in the decision-making processes. The extent to which community based groups that represent and work with vulnerable segments of the community are involved in the planning stages of Project Impact likely influences the extent to which the needs of some of those segments are addressed. Therefore, while it appears that Project Impact communities are improving in this area, there is still a great deal of work to be done.

4.8 Building Partnerships with Tribal Communities

One of the ten non-pilot communities included in this study had a tribal community within the Project Impact designation area. Although FEMA had designated a county jurisdiction and made contact with elected and appointed officials within the county regarding the initiative, within this designated area was a tribal community that did not have initial contact with FEMA and that was subsequently treated as a community partner.

The issue of tribal community involvement is an important one when considering how to successfully implement the initiative. Perhaps one of the most important lessons learned from conversations with a representative from this particular tribal community is that tribal communities should not simply be seen as potential partners. Tribal communities are governing bodies, similar to city, county, or state governments. This representative opined that while FEMA has tried to make an effort to be more inclusive of tribal and reservation environments, tribal communities are still viewed as an afterthought rather

than as a governing body that should be consulted at the early stages of the initiative's introduction or designation. As he explained:

[FEMA should not say] 'Oops, we better go back and check with the Indians as see what their thoughts are...We'll just put a paragraph in.' Well that's not fair.

While this tribal community was not approached directly by FEMA, local county officials who were approached were in contact with the tribal representatives from the early planning stages, in large part due to an existing relationship between the tribe and the county emergency management agency. Indeed the Project Impact Coordinator in this community was open to any input from the tribe and in the past had worked well with representatives from the tribal community. Although this tribe was well networked with the lead Project Impact agency in this particular community, other tribes may have a more tenuous relationship with surrounding municipal or county jurisdictions. The view expressed in that Project Impact site was that when a tribal community is so closely connected to the designated community jurisdiction, FEMA should make an added effort to include the tribe in discussions from the start. The tribal community should be addressed in a manner similar to any other government-to-government relationship and should be recognized in listings of other governmental levels. Otherwise, tribal communities may overlook the initiative when searching for or reading materials.

At the same time, FEMA and Project Impact organizers must be aware of local politics and animosities. As one respondent cautioned, different segments of the community may have different agendas and goals and may only talk when on a "collision course." This can pose challenges to consensus building.

Tribal representatives recognized that some people in their communities were particularly vulnerable to disasters; however, lack of funding resources and high poverty levels make a focus on mitigation difficult to sustain. Reservations therefore need to be involved in Project Impact, but at the same time, poorer segments of the community also put aside disaster mitigation as they face more pressing concerns. As this community representative elaborated:

It's not like, 'Oh well, my guest house got cratered and my bedroom was smashed' or 'My bedroom got smashed so I'll go to my guest bedroom and dig up my TV that I stuffed in the basement.' I mean, it's not that way here. You know, we're talking about how my gas is there for the next week to make [the drive to] the doctor's appointment or to go buy groceries...Vacations are unheard of...Money is scarce in the first place in the households and if there was a disaster, recovery is even more difficult because there just aren't any extra resources to speak of.

Your focus and priorities are different because you don't have that luxury of all the alternatives you use. You're hanging in there on the basics.

DRC's interviewees indicated that local Project Impact sites need to employ strategies to bring together tribal and non-tribal communities. Project Impact organizers in these communities should attract tribal representatives to fill leadership roles, to participate regularly, and utilize their knowledge of their own community to develop partnerships strategies, outreach programs, and mitigation projects. One representative suggested finding events that already attract these groups and integrating Project Impact into those functions, instead of hoping that the tribal community will attend specific Project Impact events. For example, at the time DRC conducted interviews in this community, a large tribal event with an attendance of over 3000 people was under way in the area; however, no Project Impact information was available at that event. As in any community, different population segments often attend different events. Another community representative suggested finding an activity or function – such as a sporting event – that ties the two communities together. To reach reservation populations, Project Impact should also work to be placed on the agenda of national tribal organizations as a network/outreach strategy on a national level, especially to involved smaller tribes with fewer resources. Utilizing national tribal outreach forums to promote disaster mitigation and the Project Impact initiative is likely more effective at reaching these communities than relying on outreach forums that have typically excluded the needs and voices of these communities.

Tribal communities are not simply segments of the population. They are political jurisdictions and should be treated as such. At the same time, Native American populations are not only found within tribal communities but of course in non-tribal communities as well. Suggestions were offered on ways to integrate Native American populations in non-tribal Project Impact communities into the initiative. In general, it was suggested Project Impact organizers need to be culturally aware. It needs to be recognized that hazard and mitigation education does not happen overnight and will differ according to the disaster subculture or expectations in the community. Existing community models may facilitate the goals of Project Impact if employed correctly. One respondent discussed how Native American culture is built upon community cohesion, citing that this is evident in week-long funerals and weddings which involve the whole

community. Enhancing and building on community cohesion would work well to facilitate disaster partnerships and community involvement if appropriately built into the initiative. In order to best understand the needs of tribal communities or of Native Americans living outside tribal communities, FEMA and Project Impact organizers must spend more time getting to really know the community. One respondent asserted that simply spending a day in the area or making a phone call signals that FEMA and the initiative are simply providing lip-service, and are not very interested in the real needs of community residents.

The suggestions that were made concerning Native Americans can also be applied more broadly to other minority communities and marginalized groups. There is a need to recognize community diversity, reach out to various segments of the population, work with community-based organizations, and integrate mitigation programs into the social and cultural activities of minority communities.

5. CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT IMPACT ACTIVITIES

5.1 Overview of Activity Trends in Project Impact Non-Pilot Study Communities

Table 5.1.1 contains summary data on activities in the four primary Project Impact activity areas: risk and hazard assessment; mitigation; partnership development; and public education and information efforts. Activities are further classified within the four categories according to their status as ongoing, completed, or planned for the future. As evident in Table 5.1.1, non-pilot study communities in the year 2000 were engaged in one hundred forty-seven ongoing activities, had completed seventy activities, and planned to initiate fifty-one activities in the future.

In terms of ongoing activities, communities were involved fairly equally in mitigation (41), public education (39), and risk assessment (38) activities, with fewer partnership activities (29). A similar pattern is observed in the data with respect to completed activities, where partnership activities (7) again account for a small segment and public education (22), risk assessment (21), and mitigation (19) are proportionately represented.

TABLE 5.1.1: TOTAL NUMBER OF ONGOING AND COMPLETED PROJECT IMPACT ACTIVITIES ACROSS COMMUNITIES BY ACTIVITY TYPE, 2001

| Activity Type | Ongoing | Completed | Planned For The Future | Total |
|------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------------------|-------|
| Risk Assessment | 38 | 22 | 8 | 68 |
| Mitigation | 41 | 19 | 18 | 78 |
| Partnership | 29 | 7 | 9 | 45 |
| Public Education/Information | 39 | 22 | 16 | 77 |
| Total | 147 | 70 | 51 | 268 |

The fact that the largest number of activities are those characterized as ongoing is not surprising, since all ten non-pilot communities had been officially involved with Project Impact for only two years or less. A similar pattern was found among the seven pilot communities in their second year of participation in Project Impact as well. In fact, the average number of ongoing activities per community in the non-pilot communities (14.7) is lower than the average number of ongoing activities per community among the pilot communities (16.9).

In terms of the number of activities completed in the two-year span from 1999 to 2000, there were slightly more overall in the non-pilot communities (70) than in the pilot communities (59). While this difference is mitigated somewhat by the fact that there were three more non-pilot communities (10) than pilot communities (7), it remains substantial. Pilot communities generally had at least one or more years of involvement with Project Impact prior to the two-year period accounted for in this report. Thus, considering these numbers in the context of duration of involvement in the program, the non-pilot communities are completing activities as well as, if not better than, the pilot communities.

The total number of completed activities ranged from two (Community H) to fifteen (Community I), reflecting the fact that some communities were better able to start and finish activities in a shorter time span than other communities. This is a product of both the types of activities undertaken and the characteristics of the particular communities themselves. Some activities require a shorter duration of involvement than others, thereby making them easier to complete. Additionally, the structure, organization, and personnel of certain communities make them more likely to initiate and progress through activities more effectively than other communities. Several representatives made statements that seem to indicate why their communities were effective in bringing activities to fruition. For example, one representative asserted that:

Our community already possessed a very aggressive emergency management ethos prior to involvement in Project Impact.

The Project Impact Coordinator from another community stated,

[W]e're already so strong in the things that we do... there's so much that Project Impact does that we've always done. We have very active partnerships with all of our major industry, and all of our emergency response groups and public information officers are very strong.

Representatives from communities that had completed comparatively few activities cited a variety of factors that hindered the effectiveness of their Project Impact initiative, including frequent turnover in the Project Impact Coordinator position; an overall lack of emergency management experience throughout the community; an inability to foster effective communication among and between local, state, and federal agencies; and general inadequacies in organizational planning and in initiating Project Impact efforts.

Table 5.1.2 illustrates the number of activities across all categories that were in progress, completed, or planned for the future in each of the ten non-pilot study communities in 2000. As indicated in Tables 5.1.2, five of the ten communities (Communities A, C, F, H, and J) directed a substantial amount of their Project Impact activity toward mitigation. Three communities (Communities D, E, and G) were most heavily involved in risk assessment activities. Of the remaining two communities, one community (B) had the majority of its Project Impact activity directed partnership, while the other (Community I) was focused most intently on public education. It is important to note that community size was not a factor in these distributions, nor does it seem that community designation type was a factor.

TABLE 5.1.2: PROJECT IMPACT RISK ASSESSMENT, MITIGATION, PARTNERSHIP, AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES BY COMMUNITY, 2000.

| | Risk Assessment | | | Mitigation | | | Partnership | | | Public Education | | | TOTAL |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|
| | Ongoing | Completed | Planned For Future | Ongoing | Completed | Planned For Future | Ongoing | Completed | Planned For Future | Ongoing | Completed | Planned For Future | |
| Community A | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 26 |
| Community B | 3 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 30 |
| Community C | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 27 |
| Community D | 8 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 33 |
| Community E | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 22 |
| Community F | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| Community G | 8 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 29 |
| Community H | 4 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 25 |
| Community I | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 33 |
| Community J | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 23 |
| TOTAL | 38 | 22 | 8 | 41 | 19 | 18 | 29 | 7 | 9 | 39 | 22 | 16 | 268 |
| | 68 | | | 78 | | | 45 | | | 77 | | | |

5.2 Status of Project Impact Planning and Assessment Activities

DRC classifies activity as “risk assessment and vulnerability assessment/plan development” if it is primarily intended to identify hazards associated with critical facilities; determine the vulnerability of public infrastructures, populations, or businesses; gauge risks to transportation and utility systems; develop plans to provide bases for hazard reduction, such as completed risk assessments, GIS mapping, and updated hazard mitigation plans.

A total of sixty-one risk assessment activities were either ongoing (39) or completed (22) across the ten non-pilot study communities in 2000. Individual community counts ranged from one to 9 for ongoing activities (average of 3.9) and zero to six for completed activities (average of 2.2). Individual community counts for risk assessment activities not yet under way, but planned for the future, ranged from zero to four (average of 0.8).

Table 5.2.1 provides examples of several types of risk assessment activities in the ten non-pilot study communities in 2000. It should be noted that many of these projects have multiple phases. For example, one project involved an “assessment of the community’s overall capabilities for responding to disasters,” a project requiring, first, the identification of possible hazards to be faced, then an exploration of the various organizations and their capabilities, followed by an assessment as to which organization could most capably and effectively respond to a specific disaster event.

TABLE 5.2.1: EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|--|
| Identify all critical data maintained on community systems | Validate elevation monuments in communities GIS to establish both vertical and horizontal controls for map information |
| Review all automated systems in community's electronic inventory for Y2K compliance | Integrate storm water planning and GIS technology |
| Incorporate Emergency Earthquake Modeling software | Develop actions to further strengthen community's GIS to aid in future decisions |
| Utilize FEMA's HAZUS software and integrate with GIS | Utilize GIS to compile historical hazard-related information and data |
| Acquire data necessary for developing a "reverse 911" system | Create community maps, digitize them, and enter that information into GIS |
| Assess most effective methods for disseminating emergency disaster information | Digitally map all rural addresses |
| Review community's capabilities for disseminating information from river/stream gauges and weather reporting agencies as a basis for timely warnings | Create risk maps that illustrate areas of high-risk and list all potential emergency shelters |
| Assess most effective methods for disseminating information about Project Impact and disasters | Upgrade hazard maps (to include: seismic, landslide, and coastal erosion hazards and tsunami inundation zones) |
| Identify and prioritize all critical facilities in the flood plain | Map all residences subjected to repetitive losses |
| Identify all hazards community could plausibly face, assess which are significant threats and determine appropriate hazard activities that would best minimize damage/loss | Conduct engineering analysis of dike that affects local dam |
| Identify vulnerable populations that are at high-risk for disaster | Hire hydrologist to validate flood information |
| Identify precaution projects to reduce impact of repetitive losses and future damage risks | Establish system for Survey Control Verification |
| Identify technical and financial assistance and incentives to implement loss reduction projects | Develop five-, ten-, and fifteen-year mitigation plans |
| Identify non-structural hazards that can be removed to reduce potential disaster damage | Review reports from previous disasters |
| Identify bridges that are either too low or do not have enough width to allow 100-year flood waters and/or debris to pass through | Complete Hazard Analysis Report and send to all elected officials |
| Update storm water detention/drainage study | Examine codes and regulations to develop ways to improve and strengthen them |
| Apply to participate in Community Rating System (CRS) | Examine feasibility of changing hazmat ordinances |
| Appoint Storm Water Management Committee to outline scope of work to be done | Develop building inspection checklist |
| Initiate period fire marshal's meetings to discuss ways to improve fire investigations | Conduct inventory of resources and hazardous structures and coordinate currently available data to complete community-wide risk assessment |

DRC findings regarding risk assessment and planning activities are as follows:

1. Nearly one-third of all risk assessment activities discussed by the respondents were completed, representing the highest percentage of completed activities among the four activity categories.
2. The average number of risk assessment activities per community for non-pilot communities in their second year (6.9) is similar to that of year two (6.4) pilot communities.
3. While the average number of activities per community is similar across the pilot and non-pilot communities, there was greater variation in the types of risk assessment activities in the non-pilot communities.
4. There seems to be a greater focus on development and/or integration of technology in risk assessment activity in the non-pilot communities relative to the pilot communities. The reasons for this increased focus could include an actual increase in such activities or a greater awareness of issues of technology among respondents; an increased awareness that is, perhaps, a consequence of the general rise in technological concerns that accompanied Y2K.

5.3 Status of Project Impact Mitigation Activities

The classification of any activity as mitigation is limited solely to those initiatives that involve specific mitigation actions. Thus, activities geared toward mitigation planning are not included within this category; those activities are considered risk assessment. Mitigation actions include the retrofitting of private and public structures and infrastructure, improving land use policy and management, removing nonstructural hazards, and other activities focused directly on hazard mitigation and disaster loss-reduction.

The ten non-pilot study communities were engaged in or had completed a total of fifty-nine mitigation activities, of which forty were ongoing and nineteen had been completed. Individual community counts ranged from one to ten for ongoing activities (average of 4.0) and zero to five for completed activities (average of 2.2). Individual community counts for mitigation activities not yet under way, but planned for the future, of which there were eighteen in total, ranged from zero to nine (average of 1.8).

Table 5.3.1 lists several of the mitigation activities begun and/or completed in the non-pilot study communities. Some of these activities were considered mitigation activities by respondents, but seem more suitably described as preparedness activities. Many of the respondents with whom DRC spoke did not differentiate between preparedness activities and strictly loss-reduction strategies, as they believed that being adequately prepared

prevented additional losses of life, economic losses, or losses associated with community disruption. This broader definition may account for the increased size of the range of activities depicted below.

There were three general types of mitigation activities that were, in varying forms, common to the non-pilot communities: (1) code revision and/or enforcement efforts; (2) buy-out of residential and/or commercial structures; and (3) creation or improvement of systems for the communication of emergency warnings.

TABLE 5.3.1: EXAMPLES OF MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| Install back flow prevention devices in sewer lines to help reduce flooding | Waiver for seismic building codes for single family homes |
| Build large retention basin to prevent flood damage in event involving significant rains | Waive floodplain permit fees to encourage home retrofitting prior to disasters |
| Elevate repetitive loss structures | Low interest loans from banks for hazard mitigation |
| Elevation certificates | Flood compensation banking program |
| Install drainage canal at local subdivision to alleviate residential flooding | Provide grants to monetarily assist residents with home retrofitting |
| Set back levees | Restrict development in risk areas |
| Strengthen and enforce regulations, ordinances, and building codes | Adopt uniform floodplain regulations within all county political entities |
| Expand basement backup backwater valve program | Canal diversion project |
| Flood retrofit of utilities | Building Structure Initiative |
| Elicit commitments from utilities that all future repairs, replacements, and new facilities will be flood protected or built outside of the flood plain area | Back-up electrical generator for waste water treatment plant to ensure functional capabilities in event of power outage |
| Voluntary buy-out of flood damaged homes and condominiums | Power generator for regional airport runways |
| Acquire and remove structures in areas shown to be among FEMA's highest recurrent loss problems | Install disaster resistant material on windows of local preschool facilities |
| Buy-out of commercial structures in flood zones along rivers | Relocate public and private structures that are located in high-risk areas |
| Acquisition of earth moving equipment | Annual stream clearing program |
| "Critter pads" that provide a higher ground for animals during flood events | Acquire property in wetlands to help eliminate road closures |
| Build/install saferooms in community centers and low-income residential areas to provide possible shelters in disaster event | Advanced Traffic Management Center at Emergency Operations Center (EOC) |
| Tornado shelters for trailer parks | Develop evacuation and reentry plans and routes |
| Retrofit existing public facilities and infrastructures (i.e. bridges and roadways) | Emergency water system connection between neighboring communities |
| Plant trees to reduce soil erosion | Outfit local Hazmat team |
| Improve Chuckwagon | Install dry fire hydrants |
| Anchor bookcases in daycare facilities | Flood monitoring system for creeks/rivers |
| Distribute Emergency Alert System (EAS) receivers | Weather radios to facilitate in-event communication |
| Hurricane tracking | Seismic protection of water tanks |
| Cool shelters | Temporary shelters for animals |

Mitigation activities not belonging to one of these three general categories were more likely to be found in only one or two communities. Much of this variation in activity type

may be attributable to efforts by the communities to engage in activities that would address their own specific needs.

DRC observations regarding mitigation activities include:

1. Non-pilot communities were more involved in mitigation activities, both in the aggregate and on average, in their second year of participation in Project Impact than were pilot communities at a similar stage of involvement.
2. Non-pilot communities did not focus their mitigation efforts solely on those hazards posed by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. While these did receive the majority of mitigation attention and effort, several communities acknowledged a need to take steps to prevent the occurrence of technological hazards as well. In fact, one community directed a substantial portion of its mitigation efforts toward fire prevention.

5.4 Project Impact Partnership Activities

As discussed previously, DRC categorizes Project Impact activities as either “ongoing,” “completed,” or “planned for the future.” This framework is effective for risk assessment and mitigation activities, since these activities often have clearly discernable beginning and end points. However, the utility of this framework is somewhat questionable when applied to partnership and education activity. The development and maintenance of partnership and education initiatives can rarely, if ever, be viewed as complete. They are continual processes that must be assessed, over time, in their totality. Thus, when the term “complete” is used in this report in connection with partnerships and education efforts, it is intended to refer to specific projects or activities, rather than the long-term processes.

The ten non-pilot study communities were engaged in or had completed a total of thirty-six activities involving collaboration among partners, of which twenty-nine were ongoing and seven were completed. Individual community counts ranged from zero to twelve for ongoing activities (average of 2.9). Three separate communities (A, F, and I) accounted for the seven completed partnership activities. Representatives from four communities (A, F, G, and I) discussed partnership activities that, while not begun prior to the interview, were planned for the future.

Table 5.4.1 provides examples of partnership projects undertaken in the non-pilot communities. As was the case in the pilot communities, partnership represents the activity category that received the least amount of community attention overall. As one Project Impact Coordinator noted:

I would say that partnership is the one thing that's probably lagging behind, that hasn't moved forward much... I don't know that a lot has been expended on that.

Another respondent stated that:

[T]here's really not much going on with partnership right now because we're booked with other projects.

Several communities did have some degree of success in attracting and maintaining the involvement and support of various partners. A strategy common to these communities was to undertake activities oriented toward creating and maintaining contact with active and prospective partners. The communities that successfully fostered partnership activities took steps to ensure that the lines of communication, once opened, did not atrophy. As one representative noted:

[W]e said 'listen, all you have to do is say you will support it and that you will be a member of our steering committee... if you feel like there is a project that you want to give money to then we will take care of that later. We just want you to be involved now and then we will worry about levels of sponsorship and money later.'

TABLE 5.4.1: EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| Coordinate with local media to disseminate information | Maintain ties with local shopping mall to ensure free use of facilities for expositions and conferences |
| Team with local advertising agency to put the Project Impact logo on benches at parks and bus stations | Send out an update every two weeks to various committees to help keep each one informed of Project Impact activities |
| Use state lottery website to advertise | Take steps to create and maintain open lines of communication with area businesses |
| Partner with local churches to gain access to church database in order to invite parishioners to participate | Partner with local suppliers to provide building materials, such as wind-proofing, flood-proofing, and disaster-resistant materials, at discount prices |
| Partner with utilities to include Project Impact information in bills and other mailings | Partner with local building supplies retailer to hold workshops on water conservation |
| Enlist Eagle Scouts to deliver information | Student intern program |
| Quilt factory made special quilts, valued at several thousand dollars, and raffled each to raise money for Project Impact | Work with banks to facilitate buyouts of land in flood risk areas by offering low interest loans for disaster resistant activity |
| Work with Chamber of Commerce to acquire and regularly update mailing lists for area businesses | Enlist U.S. Coast Guard to aid in flood relief |
| Establish speaker repository for disaster issues | Partner with state business and industry |
| Synthesize efforts and abilities of a variety of agencies to create a Mutual Aid System | Partner with community-based groups to increase focus on mitigation |
| Write out a separate MOA that is specific to each project and each partner | Develop and foster relationships with colleges and universities |
| Flood summit to bring in other townships from throughout the county | Partner with insurance agents to increase marketing of flood insurance to businesses in floodplain |
| On-call pilot and photographer to take aerial photographs during and after disasters to capture the extent disaster's impact | Enlist large local distillery in a sponsorship capacity |

A similar strategy, found in another community, involved sending out updates every two weeks to partners and external committees to keep them informed of current activity and keep the program in the forefront.

DRC findings with respect to partnership activities:

1. Communities were cognizant of a need to make Project Impact activities relevant to prospective and current partners. Rather than seeking to establish partnerships as solely funding relationships, communities took steps to attach partners to activities based on the specific skills and capacities of the partner organizations and/or their members.
2. In general, communities must broaden partnerships and activities to achieve greater representation of the community and its businesses and residents.

5.5 Status of Education and Information-Oriented Activities

The public education category includes all activities in which hazard-related information was disseminated to the public, particularly information aimed at reducing or preventing disaster-related damage and loss. Public education was on par with risk assessment for the greatest number of activities completed (22 apiece), slightly more than mitigation (20) and substantially more than partnership-related activities (7) (see Table 5.1.1).

The ten non-pilot study communities were engaged in or had completed a total of sixty-one education activities. In addition to these ongoing (39) and completed (22) activities, there were sixteen education activities planned for the future. Individual community counts ranged from zero to seven for ongoing and zero to eight for completed activities, with an average of 3.9 and 2.2, respectively. Individual community counts for the sixteen education activities not yet underway, but planned for the future, ranged from zero to four (average of 1.6).

Table 5.5.1 offers examples of public education activities performed by the non-pilot study communities in 2000. Educational activities targeted a range of audiences including professionals, organizations, the general public, senior citizens, and children. Many activities were carried out with the intent of targeting multiple audiences. For example, one community distributed disaster-related information throughout the county school system to raise the level of awareness and interest in hazards among the schoolchildren, with the hopes that the children would bring the newfound knowledge and enthusiasm home and it would translate into parental enthusiasm as well. A theme that emerged in the non-pilot communities was the use of various technologies, such as Internet websites, CD-ROM software, and computer-based presentations, to aid in the public education/outreach efforts. Several communities developed their own websites that were specifically geared toward mitigation and general awareness, while others used partnerships to disseminate information through partner websites and advertising efforts.

TABLE 5.5.1: EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

| | |
|---|---|
| Distribute disaster-related information and preparedness kits in county school system | Donate building supplies to Vocational-Technical school and have students build "saferooms" |
| Frequent power point presentations in community and in schools | Distribute interactive CD to schools and encourage students to take it home and share with their parents |
| Calendars for kids and parents | Expand local museum to include fire safety house |
| Develop a mascot for local Project Impact initiative | Youth all-hazards awareness program |
| Juvenile fire setting program | Fire safety day at local retail establishment |
| Place designations/markings on the side of local buildings to illustrate high-water marks from previous flood events | Conduct flood insurance workshops to further educate agents, brokers, and lenders about National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) |
| Earthquake awareness workshop for businesses | Mitigation seminars for area businesses |
| Procure "saferooms" for demonstrations | Home shows for conventioners that visit the area |
| Public outreach to mobile home parks regarding tornado safety and general emergency preparedness | Visit senior citizens center to discuss emergency preparedness and distribute materials |
| Intensive public awareness campaign to educate citizens and businesses on disaster response | Place articles in local newspapers detailing ongoing and upcoming Project Impact activity |
| Billboards at every intersection deemed to be high-risk for flood showing pictures of the damage at that intersection during previous major flood event | Put Project Impact logo in local newspapers following regional and/or national emergency events, along with a reminder of the community's participation in the Project Impact program |
| Hold information sessions for property owners to teach about flood- and wind-proofing techniques, opportunities for low interest loans, and emergency preparedness training | Inventory of flood-proofing and earthquake-proofing methods (to include pamphlets, videos, self-help publications, and practical examples) |
| Make retrofitting information available on-line | All-hazards mitigation library for citizens |
| Enhance and maintain comprehensive all-hazards training program | Sponsor Disaster Resistant Community Fair |
| Area Risk Management Planning Advisory Group to communicate Hazmat risks to community | Radio and television advertisements about Project Impact |
| Volunteer stream monitoring program | Community outreach programs in public forums |
| Educate community on proper floodplain use | Develop Internet sites to show ongoing mitigation |
| Construct a seismic demonstration home | Public awareness campaign for Y2K issues |
| Public Service Announcements to promote need for and benefits of purchasing flood insurance | Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) program |
| Inform both public and private sectors whether community's emergency management system meets or exceeds community expectations | Community guide containing general emergency preparedness information |
| Develop long term coordinated public information program to promote Project Impact | Distribute a variety of retrofitting materials to residences and businesses |

DRC observations regarding education activities indicate that:

1. Communities are successfully engaging in a wide variety of educational activities.
2. Educational activities are often closely associated with partnership activity, and, occasionally, connected to assessment and mitigation projects.
3. Communities are sharing educational strategies with other Project Impact communities.

6. PROJECT IMPACT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

6.1 Introduction

Organizational structures and decision-making processes influence the direction an organization takes and the achievement of its goals and objectives. Some types of structures are better suited than others to concentrate or broaden an organization's focus, accomplish particular kinds of tasks, and motivate members towards organizational goals. For these reasons, DRC examined the structure of Project Impact programs and the modes of program decision-making in the seven pilot communities.

For analytic purposes, DRC developed a fourfold classification that categorizes decision-making processes as centralized or decentralized and organizational structures as either hierarchical or flat. However, it must be noted that these binary categories are not absolute. Even the most hierarchical Project Impact structures are relatively flat compared to many other types of established community programs and organizations. DRC found this to be the case even more so for the non-pilot communities than for the pilot communities. Most Project Impact organizations have subgroups that require at minimum some general approval from the steering committee or larger partnership for large spending allocations from seed money and leveraged allotments and for significant changes in initiative policy and practice. While earlier distinctions are still useful in our assessment of the initiative, no community is completely hierarchical or decentralized in its structure.

6.2 Decision-Making and Organizational Structures

Decision-Making Structures

Communities were characterized as having centralized decision-making structures if they had established or identified an individual or a core group that could make decisions concerning what Project Impact activities would be undertaken and what strategies would be pursued. In contrast, a community with a decentralized structure may also have a core decision-making group, such as a steering/coordination committee or executive council; however, in these communities, other sub-committees or task groups often generate and execute their own activities without the need for formal approval from the core group. In other words, although the core group is informed about the activities of the subgroups and provides overall guidance, subgroups are able to initiate projects and activities on their own and without central direction.

Organizational Structures

Project Impact sites with hierarchical or vertical organizational structures had fairly elaborate organizations, typically comprised of a core group, a variety of task groups or sub-committees (often further subdivided according to specific project tasks), and some staff and liaison members. Often the Project Impact organization was located within some unit of local government and was required to report to others before taking on major new initiatives or being able to incorporate personnel into Project Impact activities.

In contrast, a flat organizational structure is one that has fewer organizational levels or layers, that does not have a steering committee, but that may have a series of task groups, each deciding upon its own agenda and carrying out its own activities. A flat structure also includes communities that have a steering committee or group but no sub-committees or additional organizational levels.

The organizational structure and decision-making processes adopted by communities have the potential for enhancing certain aspects of the program while limiting its effectiveness in other areas. For example, while hierarchical forms of organization can promote accountability, they can also discourage innovation or fail to promote deep organizational involvement. Flat organizational structures tend to be more satisfying for those who take part in organizational activities, because it tends to be easier to gain access to people in key positions. However, flat structures can also be indicative of limited partnership involvement and of an underdeveloped organization. For example, a community may have a relatively flat structure because only one or two people – typically a Project Impact Coordinator – are actively involved in the day-to-day administration of the initiative. Centralized decision-making structures can work well when a single individual or office has the authority to require others to perform, but are less effective when entities are participating in an activity voluntarily or where formal lines of authority do not exist.

6.3 Project Impact Management Structures

Table 6.3.1 shows how DRC classified the non-pilot study communities along the dimensions of decision-making and organizational structures. For comparison, Table 6.3.2 shows how DRC classified pilot communities in 2000, the third year of the pilot assessment.

None of the non-pilot communities utilized a flat and decentralized management structure. Unlike the pilot communities, where four of seven sites had hierarchical but decentralized systems, the distribution of management types was evenly distributed between hierarchical and centralized, hierarchical and decentralized, and flat and centralized structures. Management structure was not related to whether or not the community chose a top-down or bottom-up approach to decision making.

Two intermediate-sized communities and one large community (all three of which consisted of moderately large cities), as well as one regional Project Impact site were hierarchical and centralized. The only intermediate-sized community that had a different management structure was a county designation without a comparatively large city. The second of the two large communities, was not yet far enough along in its Project Impact initiative to have developed a hierarchical organizational structure and had by default adopted a centralized approach to Project Impact. This community, however, did show signs that it was moving toward a hierarchical and centralized structure.

TABLE 6.3.1: NON-PILOT STUDY COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION BY ORGANIZATIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE TYPE, 2000

| | Centralized | Decentralized |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Hierarchical / Vertical | A, B, F, I | C, G, H |
| Flat | D, E, J | |

TABLE 6.3.2: PILOT COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION BY ORGANIZATIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE TYPE, 2000

| | Centralized | Decentralized |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Hierarchical / Vertical | 1 | 2, 3, 6, 7 |
| Flat | 5 | 4 |

Community A had a *centralized* decision-making structure. Most funding decisions and activity selections were made within the Project Impact Coordinator's office, which was housed in the emergency management agency. The community did have a steering committee and a set of sub-committees, which is why it was classified as a *hierarchical* community. Yet the implementation of activities was more accurately represented by a flat structure. Community A used a *top-down* local decision-making process, with many decisions and ideas initiated from and carried out by the Project Impact Coordinator and the local emergency management agency. Originally, the steering committee had fairly wide community representation, at least on paper. However, a recent disaster and inconsistent participation resulted in an ineffective steering committee. The community evaluated its structure, brought together representatives from existing groups centered on other issues, and the initiative's effectiveness has since improved. Committees were divided by sector (e.g., private sector committee, government committee) and task (e.g., environment, public information, regulations).

Community B also had a *centralized* decision-making structure. Project Impact was housed in the local emergency management office, and final approval from the head of emergency management was required for all projects. The initiative began as a *top-down* program but seemed to be developing more bottom-up approaches for some activities. Structurally, the program was *hierarchical*, with sub-committees consisting of emergency response, public education, hazard preparedness, codes and regulations, flood mitigation, and funding. Committee chairs served on the steering committee. While sub-committees were given direction, they were given freedom to expand activities, but only with emergency management approval.

Similar to Community A, Community C had a *hierarchical* structure, but interviewees said the structure was beginning to become more flat. This community previously had a steering committee, but since has moved away from steering committee meetings to placing the emphasis on smaller groups with sub-committee chairs. Participants found this structure more focused and thought that more was being accomplished than when they relied on the steering committee. As a representative from the community

explained, at one point the community planned to have many different ongoing activities. The community found, however, that it could not recruit enough volunteers to commit time and that there were insufficient large-scale projects to keep people involved. The Project Impact initiative was housed in the City Manager's office. This placement facilitated an important relationship between city offices and elected officials. Community representatives indicated that because Project Impact was situated in this office they were better informed of what activities would satisfy city administrative requirements; the program received greater support and attention than it would have were it housed elsewhere; and they anticipated that its organizational location would increase the likelihood of long-term city funding for the Project Impact Coordinator position. At the same time, the Project Impact Coordinator in this community was not the primary actor. Instead, the coordinator acted as a facilitator and advocate for the initiative within city government. The Project Impact Coordinator believed that knowledge and skills alone were inadequate to direct the initiative without the skill and input of others in the community. The decision-making process was highly *decentralized* and *bottom-up* and was determined in all committees based on the overall program focus.

At the time interviews were conducted in Community D, the local Project Impact initiative had a relatively *flat* and highly *centralized* management structure. This community was still in the early stages of partnership development, fund distribution, and task prioritization due to difficulties in the start-up process. Although the Project Impact Coordinator indicated that the community intended to make decisions in a decentralized manner, very little had yet been accomplished, and what was underway was still centralized due to time pressures. A steering committee had been formed but again, due to the early stages of the initiative in this community, the organizational structure was still flat and could be described as *top-down*. The Project Impact initiative was housed in the city fire department and had limited participation from outside groups and departments.

When Community E introduced Project Impact, it used a decentralized *bottom-up* process of carrying out its activities. Since that time, however, the implementation of activities and the distribution of funds had become much more *centralized*. The Project Impact Coordinator was the primary decision-maker. The hazard task force – the only major committee – was consulted on projects, but one or two individuals typically carried out the tasks. The community imposed a *flat* organizational structure where the finance director, senior engineer, and public works director were consulted on issues related to their positions; the hazard task force was consulted on hazard mitigation; and the vast majority of decisions and implementation fell under the direction of the Project Impact Coordinator. At first, Project Impact was housed within the fire department. Ultimately, however, the initiative's administration was shifted to the community development office's direction due to fire department time constraints, departmental needs, and a desire to better education and outreach activities.

In Community F, all Project Impact recommendations required approval from the Mayor's office; however, the planning and implementation of the initiative took a more *bottom-up* approach. This community had a *hierarchical* organizational structure

consisting of a steering committee and sub-committees based on hazard types. Community F was somewhat *centralized* in its decision-making strategies, although it had decentralized tendencies. Like Community E, this community originally housed its Project Impact initiative within the fire department but, because it recognized that the department's emergency response focus made it not the most ideal office for facilitating necessary partnership development, education, and long-term mitigation strategies, this community was in the process of shifting the initiative to its city planning department.

Community G took a *top-down* approach to Project Impact. Contrary to several other non-pilot study communities that shifted the initiative from emergency management to community planning or development, Community G originally housed the initiative within a local planning commission but, because of difficulties within this organization, moved Project Impact to the community's emergency management agency. This community also saw several turnovers in the Project Impact Coordinator position, which hindered its progress on activities and partnership development. The organizational structure for Community G was *hierarchical*. Project Impact staff made the decisions, the steering committee approved the decisions more or less automatically, and the sub-committees made recommendations back to the steering committee. Although approval was still required from the steering committee, sub-committees had developed a fair degree of freedom and the decision-making structure can best be described as *decentralized*.

Community H was *hierarchical* and took a very *bottom-up* approach to its initiative. Local groups or individuals could propose activities to task force sub-committees. These groups screened the applicants and either rejected the proposal or directed the activity to a steering committee for approval. The community used an existing partnership network – one that already had representation from a cross-section of the community – instead of re-inventing the wheel and forming a redundant group. The management structure was relatively *decentralized* in that task forces had flexibility in terms of activity selection and funding decisions. Still, a great deal of guidance was provided by the steering committee and their final approval was required on project decisions.

Community I had a *hierarchical* structure, including a steering committee and hazard, land use, risk assessment, and public information sub-committees. The community's Project Impact Coordinator had office space in a privately-owned building. Funding for this position came from FEMA seed money; however, the community was in the process of securing funds from jurisdictions within the region to maintain funding for the position. The Coordinator worked closely with the emergency management agency but did not work out of its office. Community I used a *bottom-up* approach – although sometimes the structure demonstrated top-down tendencies – and a *centralized* decision-making structure.

Community J initially held a large community-planning meeting with wide representation from government, community-based organizations, and the private sector. In this meeting, a *bottom-up* process was used to select activities. However, actual implementation of activities was much more *centralized*. This community had many

partners but did not have a steering committee or sub-committees. Partners provided input and resources through the Project Impact Coordinator, whose office was housed in the local emergency management agency. This individual was well known throughout the area and had many established relationships with different segments of the community. The initiative relied upon the existing governmental structure to provide and make decisions regarding resource allocation and implementation. The Project Impact structure, however, was *flat* with decisions made and overseen by the Project Impact Coordinator who was under the direct supervision of county commissioners.

6.4 Summary

With respect to organizational location, the ten non-pilot communities tended to locate their Project Impact initiative within the local fire department or emergency management agency. Only one community had a Project Impact Coordinator housed in a private sector space, and only two communities housed the initiative in a city planning or development office (although a third community was planning to move in this direction). Communities that did not house the initiative with the emergency management agency suggested that other locations better facilitated partnership development and mitigation education strategies than did an agency traditionally focused on response efforts. Ultimately, however, the personality, skills, and established networks of a Project Impact Coordinator, as well as the active participation of others in the community, are important to successful partnership development and education strategies, regardless of where the initiative is housed.

As mentioned earlier, all Project Impact sites even those classified as hierarchical, have relatively flat organizational structures compared to other types of organizations. Even so, intermediate- and large-sized cities, as well as regional Project Impact sites, tended more toward vertical management structures. Some of the non-pilot communities had vertical structures in place but described the manner in which activities are carried out as reflecting a more flat organizational structure. One community, however, was in the process of moving toward a more flat organizational structure, since it was less successful with its steering committee than it had been earlier working through sub-groups, and therefore believed that a flatter structure would be more effective for activity implementation.

Vertical structures – those with steering committees and sub-committees – seem best suited to establishing effective Project Impact activity implementation strategies, as long as individuals on the steering committees were able make the necessary time commitments and support sub-committee initiatives. Flat structures can remedy implementation problems when individuals and organizations are active on specific issues but the steering committee proves ineffective. Communities with flat structures tended to place most of the responsibility for the initiative with Project Impact Coordinators and not with partner leaders. The success of the initiative was therefore more heavily contingent upon a dynamic and effective individual in the Coordinator role. The Project Impact Coordinator also had a heavier time commitment burden than counterparts in communities with vertical organizational structures. While these

communities did not necessarily lack partnership involvement, partners more often contributed in ad hoc ways and were not poised to play long-term role in decision-making and implementation.

Unlike many of the pilot communities that, over time, had developed decentralized systems of decision-making, the non-pilot communities in this study were less likely to adopt decentralized systems. Because the non-pilot communities had participated in the Project Impact initiative for less time, perhaps the time constraints and the start-up process had not yet allowed for well-established sub-committees to form.

The success of a particular organizational structure largely depends upon other circumstances within the community. Less centralized decision-making processes seem most appropriate for Project Impact, because the program attempts to bring together diverse community actors, each with their own resources, personnel, and specialized expertise, and because no single entity has the authority to compel a broad base of community participants to take part in the program. Centralized structures can, however, be beneficial in that they can generate quick progress and coordinate activities in large and complex jurisdictions. A more centralized decision-making system may work best for a city under time pressures, facing demands for strict accountability, balancing input from multiple jurisdictions within the designated area, or having trouble recruiting active partners.

Still, such structures place a large burden on the Project Impact Coordinator. Although widespread community input is certainly possible in centralized decision-making structures, long-term widespread participation and investment is not as likely. The initiative can prove quite successful in communities with centralized structures – depending on the personality and skill of the Coordinator – and possibly more successful than decentralized structures in terms of completing mitigation activities. However, the disadvantages are that initiative's success then becomes too closely connected to the presence of the individual Coordinator and the initiative is less likely to sustain long-term community involvement.

7. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT IMPACT

7.1 Introduction

This section discusses what community informants viewed as the most important benefits and challenges associated with participating in the initiative. As indicated below, many of the benefits that communities cited are consistent with the original goals of the initiative and are similar to the benefits described by participants in Project Impact pilot communities. Communities continued to struggle with significant challenges, many of which have arisen because of the very nature of Project Impact as a community-based initiative.

7.2 Benefits of Initiative Participation

Communities have derived many benefits from Project Impact, and each community was able to describe individual projects that had made an important contribution toward reducing potential disaster losses. Four themes emerged from these discussions. These themes centered on the benefits associated with resource leveraging, loss reduction, education, and fostering partnerships and collaboration. Each theme is discussed in the sections that follow.

Theme 1: Project Impact has helped communities leverage resources from numerous groups and in a variety of forms

Like pilot communities, one of the benefits non-pilot communities have gained from their involvement in Project Impact is the abundance of resources they have been able to obtain from different groups, businesses, and agencies. In fact, monetary resources directly and indirectly provided to communities through the initiative were cited as one of the most beneficial aspects of Project Impact. This money created opportunities to complete mitigation projects, leverage additional resources from other government and non-government sources, and set the stage for long-term programmatic success. However, the emphasis placed on each of these mitigation avenues varied across communities.

The majority of communities saw the Project Impact grant money as vital to implementing immediate mitigation measures. Quite simply, the money created options for communities that were not available prior to their becoming involved with Project Impact. For example, one community had repeatedly been discouraged, due to various fiscal and political constraints, in its attempts to undertake an extensive mapping project to help mitigate flooding in the community. The grant money from Project Impact, a representative from the community noted, enabled this community to undertake the mapping project on its own:

[Because of Project Impact] there can really be a major remapping. And because Congress will not fund a remapping effort by and large, then maybe this is the way through the backdoor. If you don't have accurate maps, it is difficult to convince the politicians to adopt flood plain regulations.

Another community was able to use the money to mitigate against long-standing flooding issues. As this community representative stated:

Probably the biggest benefits that we received from Project Impact would be the removal of the log jams and debris, in several area streams, that have contributed to some flooding problems in the past.

The money afforded communities spending power to buy many items that had previously been unattainable due to budgetary constraints. Several communities cited the ability to purchase “big ticket” items, such as generators, flood monitoring systems, and seismic protection for water tanks, as the greatest benefit of Project Impact. Other communities were able to acquire flood-prone properties. According to one Project Impact coordinator, because Project Impact funds went directly to local communities and were not “siphoned off” as money passed through state administration, 100% of the money directed to local communities was under local community control and could be spent accordingly.

While all communities used Project Impact funds for mitigation activities, the few communities that were least committed to the long term sustainability of the initiative used or intended to use most of their funds to directly pay for mitigation projects. These communities were also less involved in substantial leveraging projects beyond the minimum requirements and in long-term programmatic use of resources. What this means is that even in communities that are less likely to sustain the long-term goals of the initiative – using the seed money to develop long-term cooperation and funding strategies to increase the community’s disaster resistance – Project Impact funds were still directed towards worthwhile mitigation projects that increased community preparedness. In other words, while we can expect that the initiative is better suited to some communities than others, the money was still well spent in that these communities were able to direct funds toward and complete mitigation actions that would not otherwise have been possible or that would not have been completed as quickly without the funding.

Project Impact seed money was also instrumental in allowing for resource leveraging. Many community representatives consistently cited the fact that Project Impact “opened doors” for them. One respondent suggested that the program made it easier to acquire additional grant money by providing exposure and access to funds from other state and federal agencies, while another respondent claimed that the financial flexibility resulting from involvement allowed the community to address personnel issues by creating funding for needed positions. Like pilot communities, community representatives

reported many instances of leveraging, such as when governmental organizations paid for mapping and assessments, universities paid for training and courses, and business and neighborhood associations assumed the costs for mitigation activities, education, assessment, and promotion. While initially successful, most non-pilot communities were not as successful in their long-term leveraging initiatives as their counterparts in the pilot communities. This may, in part, have been because they had been involved in the initiative for a shorter time, or because they had less of an established disaster-related partnership network when they joined the initiative than the pilot communities had.

Communities that devoted more Project Impact resources to outreach and partnership efforts believed they would be better prepared to sustain leveraging efforts in the future because they had laid the groundwork for community mitigation partnerships. These communities used the financial and material resources provided by FEMA to leverage long-term sources of funding and material, which will likely enable them to continue to leverage resources from within the community long after the initial seed money has been spent. As stated above, other communities chose not to use FEMA resources to develop long-term programmatic strategies to promote continued leveraging. The direction these communities chose was independent of community size and more related to the time and motivation of the Project Impact coordinator, the integration of partners into all aspects of carrying out the initiative, community politics, and the degree of organization within partnership networks.

Theme 2: Project Impact has helped reduce damage in non-pilot communities that have been impacted by disaster and is poised to help reduce losses in future events

In over half of the communities, respondents stated that their involvement in Project Impact had already increased community preparedness for disaster events and positioned the community as more disaster resistant, even though additional work still needed to be completed. Specific mitigation actions were mentioned as immediate benefits, examples of which are outlined in more detail in the section on Project Impact activities. At least one community had already suffered a disaster in which strategies taken as a result of Project Impact mitigated the losses suffered by community residents and improvements in community preparedness resulted in minimized damage to the built environment and to vulnerable segments of the community. Several respondents indicated that residents were better informed about the hazards facing their communities, as well as more aware of mitigation actions that could be implemented to prevent serious or widespread losses. These same respondents indicated that improved overall community preparedness was a direct result of the increased knowledge, capabilities, and self-sufficiency of residents. These improvements were linked in turn to the establishment of their Project Impact initiatives. It is also important to note that Project Impact participants recognize that benefits are only realized when mitigation measures are actually implemented. For example, one Community D representative noted that his community had yet to see any mitigation benefits associated with Project Impact, since the community has yet to actually complete any mitigation activities.

Theme 3: Project Impact has aided education and outreach efforts

Similar to pilot communities, informants in the ten non-pilot sites stressed that Project Impact has provided a forum for education and outreach efforts. Disaster fairs or educational exhibitions organized by PROJECT IMPACT participants have resulted in high-profile events reaching a large number of community members. Most newer communities were not yet as successful as pilot communities in these outreach efforts, and, like their pilot community counterparts, still needed to make further efforts to reach out to vulnerable and often excluded segments of the community. Still, several had already taken innovative steps.

Project Impact partnerships have contributed to educational disaster programming, mitigation training in businesses, schools, and the broader community, as well as promotional material design, printing, and distribution. Educational resources have been developed and shared with other communities. Similar to pilot communities, some non-pilot sites have capitalized on windows of opportunity following disasters to promote mitigation through Project Impact and have used Project Impact as a promotional mechanism to spark interest when apathy grows during the lull between disaster events.

The initiative provided communities with a mechanism to promote and publicize disaster mitigation in a way that competes with other issues that demand a community's attention. These two community representatives elaborated on this point:

The single best thing about Project Impact is that it gives you the soundboard or mouthpiece to talk about disasters when disasters are not invoked. A tornado did not just rip through your community and now you want to talk about mitigation. Now you want to talk about the cost. [Project Impact] really gives you the ability to talk about why we need to be dealing with it today, and not when it hits or after it hits.

Involvement in Project Impact gives the opportunity to be part of the Project Impact media, which is big because there is a tough media market in this community. They [the community media] are stingy with the time they give out.

One Project Impact Coordinator described how the initiative provided an excellent outreach forum:

I could sit here and preach to you about how successful Project Impact is, but it's not Project Impact. It's because people inherently have the down-to-earth desire to be part of the community. And I'm just being honest....And so we seize their interest in local events to preach Project Impact.

Although two partners in this same community were somewhat more critical than the Project Impact Coordinator in their assessment of the initiative's success in widespread community outreach, these partners also acknowledged the potential the initiative had to both educate and include groups with little knowledge of hazards or disaster mitigation.

Theme 4: Project Impact helps build partnerships, foster teamwork, and bridge community efforts

We again see consistency between pilot and non-pilot communities, in that many of the community representatives interviewed in this phase of the study reported enhanced teamwork and partnership as important benefits of their Project Impact involvement.

While it is not uncommon for rifts or tensions to exist between different levels of government, the networks developed through participation in Project Impact helped to overcome some of these issues. In fact, several informants suggested that Project Impact offers a unique opportunity to build relationships between local government agencies, breaks down barriers between local and federal agencies, and opens doors to mitigation processes and access to FEMA and state agencies. One Project Impact Coordinator offered an example of the program's ability to create networks that can facilitate interagency communication and cooperation:

The beauty of Project Impact, in my opinion, is that through the spirit of negotiation we can set up a roundtable. At that roundtable, we can send officials from all local governments and... organizations... And we could talk about a common denominator, and that common denominator is disaster prevention. And we find out that we all have a lot in common and we all respect each other's right to exist and to be safe or safer. And once we open that dialogue up and start discussing those issues and come to consensus to make [our communities] more disaster resistant, it opens up doors that were closed and makes it more comfortable for [all of the groups] to talk about other issues. And I see that as a hidden benefit of Project Impact.

Teamwork has spread beyond community borders. Community representatives described mentoring as a key feature of the Project Impact experience. Mentoring can take many forms, including providing guidance on how to complete paperwork, how best to develop an organizational structure, how to complete activities, and the lessons learned from established Project Impact communities to newer initiatives. Many of the pilot communities had recently been quite active in mentoring several of the non-pilot communities and mitigation, outreach, and partnership building strategies, although more mentoring would have been welcomed when non-pilot communities were in the earlier stages of the initiative and planning their organizational structure. Project Impact has fostered a nationwide network of mentors, and at least three of the non-pilot communities

in this study had acted as mentors to other Project Impact communities as well as neighboring non-Project Impact communities, essentially becoming, as one Project Impact Coordinator termed it, “model communities” for others involved in disaster mitigation.

Unfortunately, not all communities participated in mentoring activities. Some respondents reported that mentoring opportunities were not present in their respective communities. A few respondents indicated that although other communities that were new to Project Impact approached them for assistance, they turned these newer communities away on the grounds that they simply did not have the available time or resources necessary to enter into a mentoring relationship. This suggests that opportunities to diffuse Project Impact ideas and practices are constrained by available resources.

Several representatives noted that mentoring relationships in their communities were more informal. These relationships facilitated the sharing of information and experiences, but were never formally established as mentoring. One community, for example, discovered through various channels that a pilot community of similar size had used a bake sale to raise money. As a result, this community sought to incorporate its own community-based fundraising initiative. Utilizing the unique skills of its citizenry, the community created raffles for homemade quilts rather than baked goods. Communities also used promotional materials, such as maps and brochures, from other communities as templates for their materials, thereby reducing the time and money devoted to promotional development. A Project Impact Coordinator offered an assessment of the effectiveness of shared ideas and mentoring among communities:

We steal ideas from each other all the time... I mean, I look at other communities that are similar to us, similar in size and similar in actual hazards that they may face, and try to kind of model some successes that they have had to our community, because we do not really want to try to reinvent everything. So I try to keep in touch with a lot of the other coordinators and we do have annual regional mentoring sessions that are very helpful.

The annual national Project Impact summits provided an excellent opportunity for networking and information sharing. Like representatives from pilot communities, non-pilot representatives called for improvements to the national summits, some stating that these meetings did not prove to be a valuable use of their limited time and resources, some calling for more hands-on workshops at the national summits, others remarking that the national summits were not necessarily applicable to small and large communities alike, and still others complaining that the national summits were not equally accessible to communities across the country, which led to expensive travel expenditures or the inability to attend or send large delegations. Despite these drawbacks, the summits allow some communities to share what they have learned, be acknowledged for their accomplishments, and network with other more established Project Impact communities.

More favorably viewed were the smaller regional summits held within FEMA regions. For non-pilot communities, regional summits seemed particularly beneficial, especially when attended during the early planning phase of the initiative. Several communities cautioned that it was still important to include some exchange between regions to better foster relationships and the sharing of ideas between communities that may share similar issues or hazards despite their geographic differences.

The value of the networks created through Project Impact is further evident in light of their relationship to the other positive of Project Impact outcomes discussed previously. Networks that function well can lead to mentoring, facilitate the borrowing of ideas and the dissemination of information, provide additional avenues of funding, and assist in the publicity process. These are all activities that can contribute to a heightened level of preparedness in the community. This community informant elaborates:

[Networks] offer a good opportunity to meet with a lot of the other Project Impact communities and their coordinators and other people who are involved with their Project Impact grant. And basically just sit down and have a tabletop discussion as to what kind of problems we all face and how to overcome those problems, and we offer each other suggestions and ideas. And that networking there has probably been the best help of anything that I can say that I've had from any agency, just to have that guarantee that there is somebody out there that is going through this that can help. And that there are resource materials and educational things from FEMA and also from other agencies involved with Project Impact. That has helped a great deal. We have done a lot of projects that other communities have completed, so that is where we have gotten a lot of our new ideas, from other Project Impact communities.

A representative from one community stated that she was surprised that this type of disaster mitigation initiative had not been implemented nationwide in the past, because Project Impact worked so well in her community.

7.3 Challenges Associated with Initiative Participation

Communities outlined numerous challenges that they faced in trying to implement the initiative. Some pointed to problematic bureaucratic requirements, difficulty determining how funds should be allocated, and tensions among governmental jurisdictions. Other communities discussed the challenges they faced regarding turnover in the Project Impact Coordinator position, the difficulties associated with not having a full-time coordinator, the lack of guidance or templates, and sustaining momentum.

Theme 1: Communities are frustrated with bureaucratic requirements and inconsistencies

Project Impact was initially promoted as encouraging local flexibility and control of mitigation strategies. It was also seen as different from other funding programs in that as long as seed money was indeed leveraged for mitigation activity, local communities would not have to justify decisions and follow red-tape-laden requirements. Although some communities were satisfied with the level of paperwork required of them by FEMA, others expressed dissatisfaction with what they viewed as bureaucratic constraints. As one respondent observed:

It started out as an innovative initiative with a lot of local flexibility and developed into a program that demanded increasingly many forms, red tape, and pushing what FEMA wanted done.

This Project Impact Coordinator offered a similar assessment of the bureaucratic struggles that can often emerge from Project Impact networks:

Bureaucratic requirements have created some problems and delays... It kind of just makes the actual process – to get the money and spend it and give it to the people who need it in a timely manner – kind of difficult. Sometimes it is difficult to do all of the bureaucratic chain-of-command and red tape you have to go through. That has kind of made things happen really slow and also kind of put a damper on the planning process of things. Sometimes it is hard to plan for things when you don't know when things will happen.

Respondents offered mixed assessments of the relationship between their respective communities and FEMA's regional and national offices. Some provided glowing evaluations, stating that their interactions with FEMA were extremely positive. Other respondents were dissatisfied with their relationship with FEMA, citing things like personality conflicts between contact persons, what they saw as an overbearing approach by FEMA in the early stages of the initiative, and lack of organization. One respondent described how the relationship between the community and FEMA began with a difficult start:

FEMA took the attitude of telling the community how to spend the money, and this bred animosity that has yet to be overcome.

Some community representatives that had an overall positive experience with Project Impact complained that their efforts were hindered in certain respects by a lack of organization throughout FEMA, as illustrated by the following:

It is a tremendously flexible grant as far as I can see. The FEMA folks are very nice. They are very disorganized though, super-disorganized, and that gets in my way. They ask you for things and then you don't hear anything for three weeks. Then you get a phone call from different people who are all excited and saying 'we told you we needed this!' And I say 'we did not know you needed that, when do you need it by?' They say 'we will let you know' and then we never hear from them again. They have wasted a lot of my time.

Local municipal jurisdictions, individual departments and agencies, and private sector partners occasionally had in place their own approval processes that required specific documentation or the language of agreements written in specific formats. When not consistent with FEMA documentation requirements, these local procedures at best created an additional workload for Project Impact staff and at worse resulted in prolonged negotiation over conflicting procedures. One community was pressured to spend money and move projects along but was delayed by local, state, and federal environmental regulations because these regulations conflicted with measures designed to further mitigation goals. The community overcame this obstacle by better integrating agencies' overseeing those regulations into the hazard mitigation planning process. A second community saw lawyers representing local municipal interests argue with FEMA over how some agreements were worded, substantially delaying the start-up process for that community, while a third community stated it was overburdened with pressure from FEMA to submit an application by a deadline that would meet the federal agency's public relations needs even though the deadline conflicted with local needs. In exchange, this community was assured by FEMA that it could change activities mentioned in the original application and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This resulted in the community listing activities that it knew were not feasible or would prove too costly. According to this Project Impact Coordinator:

We felt rushed to put together the Project Impact application. A lot of leeway was given and FEMA said "just put it in and you can change it later." Some things FEMA wanted to see in and the community put it in to appease them even though they knew it was not going to work.

Other accounts from communities regarding the development of the MOU illustrate the problems Project Impact communities experienced. Some community representatives viewed the memorandum as overly constraining, intimidating in its formality, and binding in its contract-like appearance. Indeed, one community representative contended that the document's similarity to a contract intimidated some partners:

I don't think anyone read the MOU, maybe two people, but nobody else has, it's just way too long. The partnership agreements are intimidating, so we have partners but most of them never signed it. It looks like a contract, and there's no reason for that.

A respondent from another community suggested that the external pressure to “get the application in” quickly and with minimal guidance created unnecessary burdens on the local community. A Project Impact Coordinator from a different community supported this sentiment:

When we were trying to schedule a signing ceremony, we were pressured to do it on FEMA's time schedule and not according to what was appropriate for the local community.

Several communities believed that information and procedures were inconsistent across the country and had received conflicting information from FEMA headquarters and their regional offices. Some communities had positive experiences with FEMA, receiving instructive and timely feedback regarding activities that could be paid for using seed money. This community respondent pointed out that FEMA was there to remind communities of the boundaries when necessary:

FEMA has been very up front in telling us what is and what is not a valid mitigation project.

Other communities had heard of activities gaining approval in other regions while not receiving approval in their own FEMA jurisdictions. Often, ambiguity on the part of agencies and communities as to what constitutes *mitigation* is at the crux of the problem. One community had been focusing on terrorism mitigation strategies; however, these efforts were not encouraged by FEMA as Project Impact mitigation activities. Post-9/11 interpretations may vary considerably as to whether or not these same strategies are indeed mitigation. Another community wanted to invest in generators and was adamant that such equipment mitigated problems and therefore could prevent loss of life. Others would not necessarily consider the purchase of generators as a mitigation activity. Confronting these inconsistencies in what constitutes true mitigation continued to be problematic. Communities suggested that FEMA should take a more flexible approach to the activity selection process, particularly when it comes to communities that face non-traditional disaster concerns. It should be stressed that despite the bureaucratic challenges communities experienced with FEMA – challenges they insisted should be corrected – all but one of the communities seemed satisfied with their overall working relationships with the federal agency.

Although communities wholeheartedly embraced the benefits associated with broadening the social networks that deal with disaster mitigation, a byproduct of expansive networks was a persistent challenge to make and act upon decisions in a more timely fashion. The

increased complexity of procedural requirements and the upward surge in the sheer number of people involved in the initiative sometimes created an atmosphere in which many informants felt hindered in their daily activities and decision-making processes. This Project Impact Coordinator summarized these problems:

I am the coordinator. I am the only employee and everybody else is a volunteer. None of those people know what everybody else is doing, so I spend a lot of my time doing that. We end up with many people on each committee because there are so many volunteers. But if you get too many people at a meeting, you don't make decisions very well... It takes us forever to make a decision and if we have a problem, we cannot respond in a very fast way. Also, there is no logic to decisions.

Complaints concerning the burden of red tape associated with the initiative were not unlike those expressed by pilot communities in the early to middle stages of their initiatives. Communities that were able to overcome such problems were those that had organizational structures that brought together groups to anticipate and deal with bureaucratic requirements before projects were undertaken, that were able to use the same documentation forms to justify expenditures to FEMA that they used to justify expenditures and progress to other local and funding agencies, that distributed responsibility for different tasks to committees, and that demanded accountability and timely progress from a steering committee. Complaints concerning extensive documentation requirements and the burdens of broadening networks should be considered in light of their positive outcomes. For example, some community representatives asserted that their MOUs helped foster the development of partnerships and opened lines of communication among various agencies and organization. The process of developing the MOU was also seen as an important source for developing ideas for the community initiative. As this community respondent noted:

It was a great brainstorming session, it brought up a lot of issues we wouldn't have thought about otherwise.

Communities saw tremendous potential for Project Impact. For example, several representatives from one community requested that FEMA act as a liaison to help ease permitting processes and coordinate with different federal and state agencies so regulations would work together and not hamper individual efforts. These representatives believed that Project Impact was beginning to serve as a model to streamline permitting process coordination within the local community and asked that further streamlining occur on the state and national level, an effort that they saw as facilitating community improvement in an expedited and less expensive way. As one Project Impact Coordinator explained, where Project Impact has been successful, it has changed local expectations about how quickly and smoothly things should work.

Theme 2: Communities experienced difficulty determining how funds should be allocated

In discussing problems with determining how grant monies should be distributed, communities pointed to difficulties with respect to allocating the grant money across the various objectives of Project Impact (namely, risk assessment, mitigation, partnership, and education). In addition, community representatives debated whether or not monies should extend past these areas based on individual community needs. This community representative summarized these basic problems with fund allocation:

Some organizations in the community want to spend money on certain things and, although they may be needed, some partners feel Project Impact should instead be about an attitude adjustment. Project Impact should be a mechanism to change a lot of things and set up a management system to get people to mitigate.

Other representatives stated that their view of fund allocation changed when their communities became more experienced with the administration of Project Impact. These communities may not have initially appreciated the difficulties associated with spending decisions until after they had allocated the resources and witnessed the return on that spending, as evidenced by this community respondent:

Five hundred thousand dollars is really not enough to be a significant mitigation project. We put three hundred thousand dollars into storm water management. As it turns out, we probably should have put thirty thousand dollars into storm water management and spent the rest of it on public information and education.

Some representatives adopted a cynical view of the allocation procedures, asserting that funding priority was awarded to those projects that were likely to garner the greatest amount of publicity, while other respondents lamented over how long it took people within their communities to make a decision to spend mitigation funds:

Most of the money and attention is geared toward the big public works projects, there is not too much left for the unglamorous.

Theme 3: In implementing Project Impact, communities must contend with intergovernmental tensions

Although Project Impact sometimes improved relationships between different levels of government and between different government departments, communities still confronted challenges in dealing with intergovernmental tensions. At times, these tensions were related to the bureaucratic requirements outlined above; however, on other occasions the

tensions were related to long-standing disagreements or differences in agendas that predated Project Impact initiation.

In particular, local officials complained about the numerous formalities and procedural measures they had to follow in order to further their projects. As one respondent suggested:

Sometimes Project Impact Coordinators have to jump through hoops to appease the higher levels of government, but then they just do what they think is best.

Community informants also expressed the belief that local communities should be treated as sovereign, to the greatest extent possible, in their day-to-day activities under Project Impact. A community representative cited an example in which a state-appointed official was sent to local communities to assist in the early stages of their initiatives. However, rather than promoting a helping relationship, the state's liaison simply instructed local officials on what things they should include and which they should not. The respondent also noted that the state's liaison arrived with little warning and with no regard for whether the timing of the visit was appropriate for the local community. The respondent opined that the state "should have just backed off and let us handle it."

One Project Impact Coordinator expressed the view that his state does not always trust local mitigation decisions. In some communities this may be justified, but in others, local communities resent the notion that they can't be trusted to make decisions for themselves. Although not the case in all communities, several of the respondents we interviewed suspected that the state harbored resentment that the local community was bypassing them and dealing directly with FEMA. As one Project Impact Coordinator observed:

The state feels like the 'third man in a tennis match,' and this has resulted in some problems in terms of what their role is.

In several communities, local Project Impact organizers continued to have a positive and friendly relationship with the state despite an underlying tension while both governmental levels were trying to determine the state's role. Some of these respondents had since involved the state and were happy with the collaboration. In one case, it was the state emergency management agency that finally helped alleviate tensions between a local community and FEMA. Other respondents still adamantly believed that the direct relationship established between FEMA and the local community as part of Project Impact was preferable to involving the state. Either way, several communities expressed the idea that they needed to develop their own solutions to best deal with what they perceived as intergovernmental tensions.

Respondents were quick to offer solutions for dealing with existing intergovernmental tensions and limiting the emergence of further conflict. One frequently mentioned solution for such issues was to appoint a liaison to facilitate communication and

coordinate agency objectives, regulations, and action plans. Community representatives noted that a liaison could assist the community in negotiating various permitting processes and regulations into a single governmental framework. Several respondents, while discussing the need for a liaison of this kind, took pains to point out that certain liaison characteristics were of the utmost importance. As one respondent suggested:

States should pick their community liaisons carefully, as the wrong person can rub people the wrong way.

Not only were there tensions among the different levels of government; friction was also common among agencies and individuals at the same governmental level. Such tension is illustrated in one Project Impact Coordinator's depiction of competitive relationships between the four local governments a regionally-designated site. For this coordinator, the situation was exacerbated by the fact that, in this community, the coordinator position was jointly funded by each of the four governments. Given the climate of competition that exists in this locality, there is a great deal of pressure on Project Impact officials to produce results and satisfy each of the governments that fund and oversee the program. The presence of multiple governing agencies can create a system of obligations and an excessive reliance on network ties. An informant from this community discusses the difficulties created by such a scenario:

[The Project Impact Coordinator], right now, is depending on the local governments in each of our areas to pay the salary [for the position]. Project Impact is still new here. We've been here a year. It is kind of like a baby, you have to have it awhile, and you have to work it into the community. It has to grow, and I don't think a year or two years is really time to see what the project could be versus three to five years. I think that is where FEMA should come in and actually fund the salaries for the Project Impact Coordinator. That would take a big burden off of each locality.

Project Impact did not emerge in a vacuum. Many communities have varying histories of conflict and disagreement between sectors and departments. The component of partnership and cooperation that is so important to the concept of Project Impact must contend with pre-existing conflicts and, although not insurmountable, problems may take time and innovative partnership building strategies to overcome. In fact, successful interaction through Project Impact on disaster mitigation issues can, on occasion, facilitate improved relations on other issues as outlined in the above section on initiative benefits.

Theme 4: Turnover in the Project Impact Coordinator position or lack of a full time Project Impact Coordinator delayed activities

As demonstrated in the pilot communities, turnover in the Project Impact Coordinator position can prove particularly problematic to the initiative. The departure of a Project Impact Coordinator results in a loss of valuable information and established connections. Integrating a new staff member into the coordinator's position, particularly when he or she has had no prior involvement in the program, is accompanied by delays, since the new coordinator must become acclimated to the initiative's objectives, methods, plans, funding, and members. One community was particularly hard-hit by turnover in the Project Impact Coordinator position:

Within the first year, we have had three different Project Impact Coordinators, so there has been a lot of changes and things have been kind of mixed up quite a bit. Those changes I guess have probably had the most impact on everything that we do with Project Impact because there are a lot of inconsistencies [as a result].

This informant went on to discuss the consequences of the high rate of turnover in the coordinator position:

It has been very, very difficult to keep people interested and motivated since things have changed so much in the past. A lot of the original people who were involved with getting the grant application to FEMA and filling out all the paperwork, those people are all gone, they don't even work here anymore. So the actual core group who was there to keep the momentum going in the early stages, they have ceased to work here. Basically, when I was hired we were starting all over again.

It is of course not impossible for communities to stay on track and on schedule despite Project Impact coordinator turnover. The change may ultimately be beneficial to an initiative, and a program should never be closely tied to a single individual that it relies on his or her continued presence and participation. Turnover does, however, often bring delays that must be accounted for in project timelines and plans.

Also similar to pilot communities, non-pilot communities stress the importance of a full-time Project Impact Coordinator for the success of the initiative. In most communities, the Project Impact Coordinator position was a component of another position, typically in an office housing emergency management or city management. These Project Impact Coordinators were frequently overburdened and had to balance their Project Impact-related duties with other responsibilities. As a result, Project Impact was sometimes ignored for periods of time when other more pressing or immediate concerns took priority.

The experiences of both pilot and non-pilot communities indicate that it is unreasonable to expect significant and sustained progress with Project Impact unless the role of Project Impact Coordinator is institutionalized as a full-time position. The coordinator's job is complex and often difficult. It also calls for particular kinds of skills and activities, such as those associated with inter-organizational networking, that require time to develop and that must be carried out consistently over time. These kinds of job requirements cannot simply be added onto an individual's existing duties.

Theme 5: Communities recommended that more guidance should be provided by FEMA

Several community respondents recommended that FEMA provide Project Impact communities more guidance and directions, particularly during the early stages of the initiative. Respondents reported that they had received ambiguous or conflicting guidelines on how to proceed with various aspects of the program. As a Project Impact Coordinator elaborated:

I think a lot of those rules and policies to follow are kind of made up as we go along. Because this Project Impact grant is all so new, everything is very unclear, which has probably been one of the most difficult things of the grant. It is very unclear as to what we are allowed to do. Sometimes FEMA seems undecided on what they can do... The biggest problem is there was not some set policy or procedure to follow as to you can do this, this and that and it has to be done within this certain amount of time period and these are the resource materials to help you... It would have probably been a lot more helpful if would have had something like that rather than you are awarded \$500,000, so have fun and go do some projects and prevent disasters.

Community representatives also observed that a general time frame for stages of the initiative and program management templates would have been beneficial. Communities described the start-up process as a "learning curve," and some respondents therefore viewed the early stages of Project Impact as "wasted time." With the benefit of hindsight, community representatives suggested that many early mistakes could have been avoided. This respondent discussed problems experienced with the initiative began:

The difficult part about Project Impact is that FEMA did not give an instruction book on how to do it. So, I think, at least in our case but speaking for all of the communities, that we thought it was a great idea but did not know which direction to go. And, it is open-ended so that communities can address problems in their specific community, but this also creates a problem for getting started. And you know, sitting back two years later, I think everybody has 20/20

hindsight and can see things that we could have done differently... We were learning, but it was a learning curve that did not necessarily have to be there... But it is difficult at first just to get going... It would be great if we had a start-up kit, a little tool kit.

Another representative supported these views:

Why isn't there a template? Why do I have to develop all of these databases when there are two-hundred coordinators developing these? Even the brochures. When I saw what other communities had done, it was so much better than ours, but we had spent so much time on ours. So, when I see a new coordinator, I make them a best of the best package and send it to them.

Communities had indeed been given 'tool-kits' provided by FEMA; however, those materials still did not fulfill the need expressed by respondents. They wanted easy-to-use templates, digitized models or forms that could be adapted by the individual community, and documents that would provide information not only on what to do, but how to go about doing it.

The simultaneous desire for Federal guidelines, local sovereignty, pre-developed templates and program flexibility should not be seen as conflicting. Communities want to make their own decisions and create an agenda that is tailored to their specific needs; yet they also want certain types of clear-cut direction and assistance from FEMA. While regulations and requirements become clear over time, communities express a desire to learn about guidelines at the beginning of the initiative and to have the information to satisfy these requests. They do not want to be told they will be free of requirements only to find requirements emerge throughout the process. Communities want tools to successfully achieve their goals, but they want to mold these tools so as to best meet their own needs. Communities embrace the responsibility of local decision-making, and want support – expertise, training, information, resources, funding – rather than oversight as they move ahead on those decisions.

Theme 6: Communities experience difficulty sustaining momentum

Once mitigation funds were allocated, several communities that did not have well-established organizational structures in place experienced difficulty following through on projects. One Project Impact Coordinator thought that the strategy of bringing together different sectors in the community was a good one, but that it is important to recognize that community collaboration does always function beyond the brainstorming phase:

Saying it one day and then following through after you make a commitment are two separate things. A lot of time people will say that [an activity] sounds good but then a

few months later they're not interested anymore. So sometimes that energy falls out and kind of goes by the wayside.

Many informants expressed regret that their communities had not moved more strongly to take advantage of the excitement that had been generated initially by their involvement in the program. Several community representatives cited a need to follow through with proposed plans and to follow up immediately with prospective partners and funding sources in order to capitalize on support opportunities. Part of the problem with sustaining momentum and institutionalizing the concept of mitigation in government, the private sector, and the community at large, is that there is often too little sustained follow-up with Project Impact partners. For example, some of the communities that admitted to neglecting at least some of the partnerships they had worked at establishing at the start of the initiative noted that partner follow-up was needed to improve the initiative.

Like their pilot community counterparts, Project Impact participants struggled to keep their elected officials and citizenry focused on disaster mitigation and to remind them that mitigation is an ongoing effort. This was a problem for both large and small Project Impact sites, thought perhaps for different reasons. Several smaller communities stated that the challenges they faced in following through on activities occurred because there is already so little activity in smaller communities, and therefore it is difficult to sustain interest and momentum. Other larger communities said that their organizations already are so busy that the Project Impact initiative is ignored. Thus, it seems that community size is not necessarily a factor in terms of whether a community is able to successfully promote the idea of mitigation in a long-term fashion. Communities of all sizes face obstacles in promoting the initiative and encouraging the community to adopt the initiative's principles and goals. One community representative from a larger community observed:

In the past, FEMA has come in for floods and they ride in on their big white horses and they hand out checks and everybody thinks big brother is taking care of it. There is more to it. We can no longer keep paying and paying and paying for all of this. I think there needs to be some major changes here. In a smaller community, getting the idea of mitigation to stick can be done. In a community of our size, it is tough to do that.

Two representatives from the same community offered their assessments of the difficulties inherent in making mitigation an institutionally ingrained principle, particularly in communities where disasters seldom occur or those that do are moderate in severity:

To try to administer the Project Impact grant in a community that is not hammered by disasters year after year is pretty difficult. People have the feeling that nothing will happen to them and they are not at extreme risk for any kind of disaster. So, when you are trying to use money specifically for disaster awareness and preparedness in a community that has not undergone a disaster in a long time it really is quite difficult to get their interest and support. If you ask someone to do a specific task, they will do it. When that task is over, they go home and they wait for a phone call to say 'Okay, we are going to have a home builder show, will you watch the booth?' They are not absorbing the idea of hazard mitigation. We have had three or four presidential declared disasters in the county in the last five or six years, but they have all been in very small geographic areas. We have not had a regional disaster since 1959. So, by and large, most of the businesses and residents in the county do not think that there is a problem. It is hard to keep them involved or make them believe, if you will, until they are up to their waist.

The majority of respondents felt that not enough was being done to “get the word out” or “sell” the initiative in their communities and that promotion of the initiative to the community, prospective and current partners, and elected officials, was lacking. They also believed that FEMA could do much to improve its efforts to promote the initiative on a national scale to the general public, private partners, and government agencies. Community representatives suggested more widespread placement of the Project Impact logo to keep the program in the forefront of community discourse. Other informants suggested the need to capitalize on the occurrence of local disasters, while still others observed that even narrowly-averted disasters could be used as a reminder of the value of the program. A few communities even pointed to national disasters that did not directly impact the community or its citizenry in order to promote Project Impact.

Respondents did suggest that unique community characteristics ultimately determine the sustainability of the program. The local culture of a community generates different challenges and strengths. One respondent suggested that her community’s challenges in encouraging disaster mitigation stemmed from the large proportion of rental properties in the community. Building owners typically do not live in the disaster-prone areas of the community and, claimed the respondent, renters did not feel as connected to the community or willing to invest in making costly changes to their residences in the same ways that homeowners would. Another community relied on visitors and tourism to sustain part of the local economy and infrastructure, resulting in community officials being less supportive of a program that publicizes community hazards. As this community representative stated:

Some private and government partners do not want people to know about hazards, as they make the community seem less attractive to visitors and businesses.

A representative from a community that has had difficulty selling the idea of mitigation cited an overall lack of concern about disaster:

One of the main reasons is lack of public support. There is a feeling of apathy within the local community that it is already prepared for disaster and we are just fine and dandy where we are now.

Alternatively, a respondent whose community had successfully embraced mitigation as a way of life also highlighted the relationship between community characteristics and tendency to adopt loss reduction measures:

I could sit here and preach to you about how successful Project Impact is, but it's not Project Impact. It is because people have the down-to-earth desire to be part of the community... We seize their interest in local events to preach Project Impact.

Thus, success in launching hazard mitigation programs can be based on a community's general interest in self-improvement. Mobilizing a community that already has an interest in improving its overall quality-of-life, and connecting mitigation to that interest, makes it more likely that mitigation can become institutionalized over time.

A factor that may serve as a barrier to the integration of mitigation into the community is the presence of groups that are not amenable to certain mitigation-related activities. Several communities explained that key potential partners or powerful community lobby groups actively oppose some Project Impact-driven measures. Communities must thus take into account the possibility of local opposition to mitigation. One community indicated that any measures or regulations that utilize the term "zoning" would not successfully pass through the necessary legislative channels. An activity may still be a zoning activity, but to identify it as such in the community is to guarantee failure in implementing that part of the initiative. As a solution, this community omitted the word 'zoning' from activities and achieved desired results. In another case of a community resisting mitigation measures, a representative noted that although mobile home parks are among the areas in the community that are most vulnerable to hazard events, it was difficult to enact change in these areas. The respondent elaborated:

The trailer park is a big lobby in this state, and all over. They have a good lobby, and anytime you try to legislate anything in these areas they are opposed to it.

In addition to trying to overcome locally-based resistance, there is also a need to repeatedly justify the program to local elected officials. Understandably, elected officials often want to move on to new issues and projects that they believe are both important and timely to constituents. For elected officials, Project Impact is often just one community activity among many that is demanding of their attention and resources. This creates a very short window of opportunity for communities to demonstrate the efficacy of the program. As in the pilot communities, Project Impact participants struggle to keep their elected officials focused on disaster mitigation, to maintain support for the initiatives and costs, and to remind officials that disaster mitigation is an ongoing effort.

Another of the difficulties that communities are having with FEMA is the long-term and often intangible nature of many Project Impact activities. It is difficult to justify funding and patience for activities that are not immediately visible, such as flood plain regulations that prevent building in areas that face a high risk of flooding or other long-term mitigation projects. At the same time, informants also point out that from the very start of the initiative, FEMA encouraged communities to undertake more visible “digging in the dirt” projects, regardless of whether communities saw those activities as in their best interest. Communities believe that it is important to demonstrate short-term successes, but also stress the need to continue to focus on long-term loss-reduction strategies that may only demonstrate their substantial pay-offs – prevention of loss of life, community disruption, economic losses, along with improved quality of life – many years from now. Yet this goal can come into conflict with the need to show tangible short-term progress and products in order to ensure continued local support.

8. THE FUTURE OF PROJECT IMPACT

8.1 Views on the Future of the Project Impact Initiative

When DRC asked pilot communities to estimate how likely it is that their community would be involved in the initiative after ten years, pilot community informants showed a general optimism about Project Impact's future in their communities. For example, more informants indicated that they believed the Project Impact initiatives would still be active in their communities ten years from now. Informants considered their communities stronger – both in terms of disaster resistance and community partnerships – for having become involved in Project Impact. As one Project Impact Coordinator stated, because of its involvement in Project Impact, the community will “be better built, better prepared, and a safer community ten years from now.”

At the same time non-pilot communities generally expressed less optimism than their pilot community counterparts about the future of the initiative in their respective communities. Community I was most optimistic followed by Communities B and H. Communities A, C, G, J offered mixed assessments of Project Impact's future while Communities D, E, and F were relatively pessimistic about the perseverance of the initiative. Project Impact coordinators were more often optimistic about Project Impact's future than other community representatives, but this was not always the case.

Community I was quite hopeful about its ability to continue the Project Impact program in the future, as long as it continued to be successful in balancing the need for short-term successes with long-term accomplishments. Interviewees believed the community had made substantial progress in the public information phase of Project Impact and was well positioned to move ahead with more tangible projects. Public education was important at the beginning, and crucial to attracting broad-based support. As funding becomes tighter, they envision less partnership and education and more of an activity focus to continue to get tangible results. Many officials and partners in this community saw the initiative eventually becoming integrated with other environmental initiatives, a move they said would ultimately demonstrate the success of the program in pulling together risk reduction, quality of life, sustainability, and environmental issues. At the same time, they hoped such efforts would retain the Project Impact brand name, since the initiative is now associated with FEMA within the community. If the name of the program were to be changed in the short-term, communities felt that they would lose the brand recognition. As this Project Impact coordinator explained:

If they drop the Project Impact name, it's going to hurt us very badly and I believe that's a real possibility.

One partner stated that if the community loses federal support and Project Impact is abandoned at the local level, the efforts communities have invested would have been a “waste of time”:

Then this [will have] been such a waste and will be a loss in a lot of ways. And then I suspect that if we're not [involved in the initiative, FEMA will be paying out and SBA is going to be paying out an awful lot of money. I see this [initiative] as a way of saving money for FEMA, saving money for SBA, and not having to pay people to rebuild time, and time, and time again.

Officials and partners from Community I believed progress within the region would be slow but that they would continue to move in the right direction toward reducing disaster losses. They described such progress as involving more regional approaches to mitigation, greater government oversight, and higher levels of community participation.

Community H sees the future of the initiative as closely connected to the support of elected officials. Community representatives hope the initiative and the principles that guided it would continue. Because they integrated Project Impact into an existing organizational structure that already encouraged broad-based community participation, they were more optimistic about its continuity than some of the other communities. One official believed that more funding would have to come from business or industry, which he believed could result in those groups having more control than they should over implementation and mitigation activities. He saw this as unfortunate, since he views government as an entity that should ensure the protection of the public with less concern for profit than the private sector.

Community B was also optimistic about the initiative, but agreed that the brand name would likely not last with the change in federal administration. The Project Impact coordinator stated that his community was involved in hazard mitigation prior to Project Impact, but that the initiative had allowed for increased exposure, focus, and funding possibilities. One partner believed the community would continue to build upon their successes, but that its ability to move forward would partly depend on continued federal support:

Having FEMA funds allow us to do things. When you're not having to raise money for programmatic stuff, for the basis of it, it certainly frees you to do some innovative things. Do I think the program would go away? Probably not. Do I think it's better because we have the funding? Clearly.

Community representatives who were skeptical about the initiative's future offered several different reasons for their pessimism. A representative from Community J stated, for example, that because the Project Impact coordinator had taken on too much individual responsibility for the program, the community had not generated enough community-wide participation to ensure its long-term support.

Several communities believed that although mitigation steps would continue to take place, just as they had for years prior to Project Impact's introduction, future activities would no longer be called 'Project Impact activities.' Some community representatives went further to say that the initiative itself would continue, but likely under another name.

Other interviewees emphatically stated that Project Impact would not be a part of their communities in ten years. For example, the coordinator from Community D stated that he saw no long-term benefit associated with further participation. This community saw the initiative only as a funding opportunity to complete several important projects. Similarly, representatives from Community E believe their community would continue to address hazard mitigation issues as they arose and as funding opportunities presented themselves; however, they primarily saw Project Impact as a means to contend with current risks. As this official explained:

I think the community is looking at Project Impact as a catalyst for solving its problems today, and hopefully those problems don't reoccur and won't exist ten years from now.

This viewpoint is short-sighted, since it does not account for the emergence of new risks and demands as current hazards change. This community had developed a hazard-focused task force, but activity within this group had already begun to decline as the community felt hazard mitigation was nearing completion. The official quoted above believed that the same people would be involved in mitigation activities in the future, but only as they related to their existing job roles, not as a function of any new structure that had developed as a part of the initiative.

Officials from Community F were also pessimistic about the future of the initiative. One partner felt that once the federal funding is spent, the initiative would soon end, since hazard mitigation is lower on the list of community priorities needing to be addressed than issues such as poverty, drugs, crime, and unemployment. The Project Impact coordinator was more hopeful, but agreed that mitigation, particularly as it related to fire hazards, would come back as a role subsumed under existing emergency management activities. Another official, equally pessimistic about Project Impact's future, was even more determined to make the case to local administrators that hazard mitigation is a community development issue that requires a full time position and long-term commitment to enhanced community involvement.

The remaining communities were mixed in their assessments of how likely it is that Project Impact and programs like it will be active in their communities after ten years. Some believed that the ideas behind the initiative would continue, but that the program would change its name as federal support declined. Previously-established organizational structures that were built upon as Project Impact was introduced would continue, allowing for new focus on hazard mitigation. Others believed that as the people who were most involved with the initiative move on to different positions, the commitment to Project Impact will move with them, and that they will show less loyalty to Project Impact as a program even if they do support the concept of hazard mitigation. These

communities saw their continued involvement tightly coupled to the support of FEMA and Congress, retention of community champions who support proactive mitigation strategies, and continuity of local political support and funding. This is particularly true, said those we interviewed, when the community is spared a major disaster over a period of years and public apathy on disaster-related issues increases.

8.2 Conclusions

The non-pilot study communities are committed to disaster mitigation. Many had a long history of implementing mitigation projects before the idea of Project Impact was even conceived. While the pilot communities had several years to establish a relatively firm support and outreach base for the initiative, these communities had less time to develop their programs. Perhaps as a result, questions that surfaced regarding the future of the initiative on a federal level seemed to create pessimism among non-pilot communities more so than it did among the seven pilots.

Communities that did not have Project Impact champions, that had encountered a greater degree of difficulty in the start-up process, and that had envisioned the initiative as a means to fund much needed mitigation projects were not hopeful that the initiative could last the decade. Communities that had envisioned Project Impact as an opportunity to refocus existing efforts, bridge initiatives in the community, demonstrate tangible accomplishments as a means to gain public support for more extensive long-term activities, and foster public and political education and outreach were more likely to see the initiative as persisting or being successfully integrated into the planning and implementation of comprehensive community goals. In optimistic and several mixed-optimism communities, Project Impact was on its way to enabling well-established mitigation efforts to flourish, attracting a broader range of participation, bridging local mitigation actions, initiating regional projects, and evolving a focused, planned approach from what had been ad hoc activities. Where communities were less advanced in their mitigation efforts, Project Impact was beginning to provide a national platform from which to approach elected officials, community groups, and business communities, complete risk assessments, and begin a more concentrated effort toward increasing disaster resistance.

At the time these data were collected, the threat of dismantling the initiative at the federal level seemed to have already distracted attention from mitigation activity. It also led to debates on whether it was worthwhile to continue long-term planning efforts and a participatory organizational structure, or whether communities would be better off investing their time completing several short-term projects. Non-pilot communities faced similar questions, such as:

Will local communities provide administrative funding to continue the program, including paid staff positions, and if not, where will this money come from?

Will the federal and state agencies continue to augment local funding for larger mitigation projects?

Will the structure and mandate of local initiatives change once the federal seed money has been spent?

Will the change in federal administration and the uncertain future of Project Impact –for example, its ability to provide guidance, contacts, policy, leadership, and funding – negate what has already been accomplished?

More so than pilot communities, non-pilot communities were still on a learning curve with respect to how best to implement the philosophy of community-based pre-event loss reduction. At the same time, they were concerned about the possible demise of the program on a national level and the impact that move would have on funding, resources, access to expertise, and guidance. Not all communities demonstrated the same commitment to sustaining the initiative or to fostering long-term partnerships. However, it was also the case that some communities that expressed low commitment to long-term sustainability already had more activities than those that demonstrated high commitment but had spent more time at the beginning of the initiative laying the groundwork for a sustainable program.

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